

As the fourth generation of his family to have served on the Katy school board, Waller County Judge Glenn Beckendorff is passionate about giving back to the community

The Beckendorff Family Legacy

Four generations make their mark on Katy education and the community

Written by Jody Lane

Photo by Suzi Issa

A commitment to education and the Katy community earmarks the pages of the Beckendorffs' family history. Their dedication and influence can be seen everywhere around town, from Beckendorff Rd. to Beckendorff Junior High to the office of Waller County Judge Glenn Beckendorff, who has stepped up to make his mark in present-day Katy. Following in the footsteps of his uncle Roy Beckendorff, grandfather Milton Beckendorff, and great-grandfather Robert Beckendorff, Judge Beckendorff represents the fourth generation of his family to have served on the Katy school board.

"I believe these Beckendorff men were visionaries who understood the future expansion of this community," shares Kay Beckendorff Sword, granddaughter of Roy Beckendorff. "They established strong foundations for the local school district and the churches that their families attend. It was important to them to do their civic duty."

Building a Strong Foundation

Back in 1896, when Katy wasn't much more than a post office and a grocery store and it took a day to travel by covered wagon to Cypress, three men rode out on horseback to the Harris County Courthouse over 25 miles away. Robert Beckendorff and his son Milton A. Beckendorff, along with Henry Cobb, were determined to obtain land for a school district.

Discovering that the Addicks School District already had all the land in the southwestern portion of Harris County didn't deter them. They stopped by Addicks on the way home to make inquiries, and the two groups eventually struck an agreement to divide the parcel equally. Within a year or so, the children on Katy's prairie were sitting in a one-room school building on Cobb's place, and Milton, Robert, and Cobb were sitting on Katy's first school board of trustees. "Robert and Milton's most significant accomplishment? My guess is that they were simply pleased – very pleased – to have any school for their children to attend," shares Sword.

Roy Leland Beckendorff belonged to the first generation of children to benefit from that deal. Born in 1903, he would one day tell his grandchildren about climbing up the windmill as a boy and counting the houses on the Katy prairie - all seven of them. In 1934, he followed in Robert

and Milton's footsteps and became the third generation of Beckendorffs to serve on Katy's school board. When the board approved the purchase of 100 acres on Hwy. 90, the present-day site of Katy High School and the Katy ISD administration buildings, Roy was there.

Working for a Better Life

Judge Beckendorff found himself on the receiving end of this determination to give every generation a better life through education. When he graduated from Katy High School in 1968, though, all he wanted to do was work on the family's farm.

At the urging of his family, he went to college instead. "And when I came back home - the first one on my dad's side of the family to ever graduate from college - there still wasn't room for me on the farm," recalls Judge Beckendorff. He decided to become an agriculture teacher instead and spent the next six years getting to know school board members, teachers, the superintendent, and parents.

When he quit teaching in 1979 to work for *The Progressive Farmer* magazine, he was urged to run for the school board. In 1980, he became the fourth generation to serve as a trustee, using his experience as a teacher to give back to others.

A Learning Experience

"Just like other positions, it's not quite what you think it will be," says Judge Beckendorff of serving as a school board

trustee. "I was surprised by how little control we had over funding, for instance. So much was dictated by the state. But it was something I enjoyed."

The accomplishment of which he's most proud shouldn't be credited to him, he says, but to two Katy moms of children with special needs. "Nothing was in place that taught life skills for the bigger world," he explains. Beckendorff worked diligently with those two moms to help change the system. "During those two years, we made a lot of progress and established skill-teaching programs," he recalls. "They did all the leg work. I just tried to open a few doors."

One Stick in the Bundle

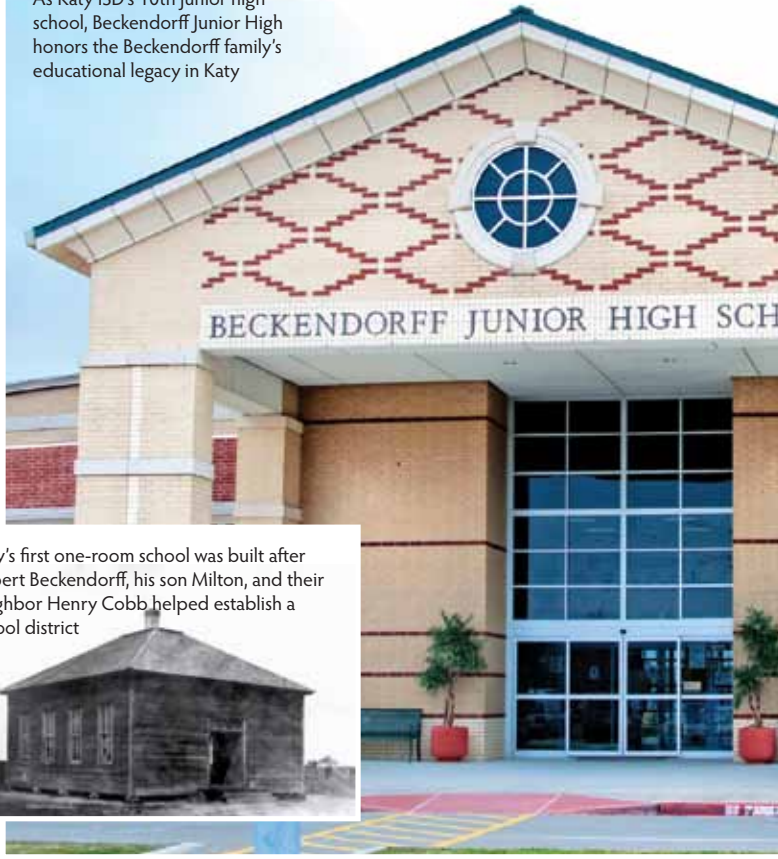
Judge Beckendorff encourages others to get involved in the Katy community, just like many generations of his family have done. "Find a group that's been successful, whether it's



Kay Beckendorff Sword with the plaque she received at the dedication ceremony of her family's namesake school, Beckendorff Junior High

Photo by Suzi Issa

As Katy ISD's 10th junior high school, Beckendorff Junior High honors the Beckendorff family's educational legacy in Katy



Katy's first one-room school was built after Robert Beckendorff, his son Milton, and their neighbor Henry Cobb helped establish a school district



in the schools, churches, economic development groups, or fire department," he advises. "Ask, 'What can I do?' It doesn't matter if you're the guy who sweeps up or takes down the tables or organizes the meeting. Just get involved."

"I believe these Beckendorff men were visionaries who understood the future expansion of this community."

-Kay Beckendorff Sword

He still takes to heart the one time a teacher told him, "It's best if you can be a stick in the bundle." Judge Beckendorff explains, "He illustrated this with a pile of sticks. He'd take one and break it, saying, 'That's how strong you are alone.' And then he'd grab three or four and try to break the bunch, and say, 'Now that's how strong you are together. If you boys get together and work in the same direction, there's no stopping you.'" KM

JODY LANE enjoys talking to and writing about the unique people who make Katy great.

A woman always desires to look the best she can.

*But great skin, hair, eyes and lips
are only a frame for a*

Smile!

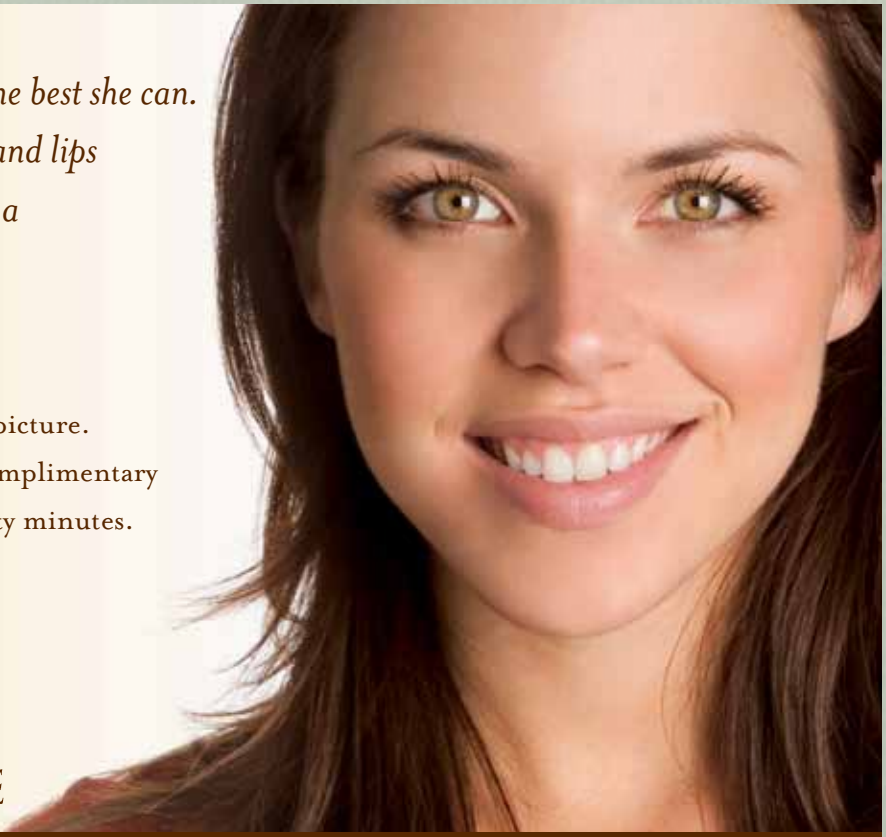
A great smile makes a great picture.

*With Dr. Charles A. Ray III, a complimentary
smile evaluation takes just twenty minutes.*



DENTISTRY BY RSE

23855 CINCO RANCH BLVD., SUITE 240, KATY, TX 77494 PHONE: (281) 391-4422 FAX: (281) 391-4424
WWW.KATYDDS.COM



Dr. Robert H. Friedman

Board Certified Obstetrician & Gynecologist
Over 30 years of experience treating loyal patients



© 2010 Katy Magazine

- ◆ Obstetrics & Infertility Care
- ◆ Chip & Traditional Medicaid Welcome
- ◆ Menopause Treatment Bioidentical Hormones
- ◆ Wellness & Disease Prevention
- ◆ Amazing Physician Directed Weight Loss Program. Hundreds of Successes Right Here in Katy!


*Now located in the new
Provincial Professional Park*

21376 Provincial Boulevard • Katy, Texas 77450
www.RobertFriedmanMD.com



Robert H. Friedman, MD, PA, FACOG
Obstetrician and Gynecologist



Miriam K. Friedman, PhD
Physician Directed Weight Remedies Program
Director of Services
Independent  Distributor

www.BobbyFriedmanMD.com
Health & Wellness

281-578-6868

Call for an appointment

We welcome new patients

Aceptamos "chip" y Medicaid tradicional. Se habla español.

Four Generations of Trustees



Robert Beckendorff
(1850 to 1932)

- Served starting in 1896
- Plowed Morton Ranch Rd. between Pattison and Katy



Milton "M.A." Beckendorff
(1875 to 1964)

- Served starting in 1896
- He and other trustees hired teachers directly



Roy Leland Beckendorff
(1903 to 1969)

- Served from 1934 to 1945
- Instrumental in purchasing 100 acres for the district's new school in 1945



Judge Glenn Beckendorff
(1950 to present)

- Served from 1980 to 1983
- Most proud of helping implement special education programs in Katy ISD

Seeking A Great Sitter?

SeekingSitters® unique referral service of experienced, background screened and on-call sitters is the perfect answer to your family's needs!

- ✓ **We Do All The Work For You** - Recruit, personally interview, qualify and extensively background investigate every sitter
- ✓ **On-line Convenience & Reliability** - Access sitter profiles, request a Certified Professional Sitter and pay by credit card
- ✓ **Personalized Customer Service** - Hand-selected matching of sitters with members at preset hourly rates
- ✓ **Certified Professional Sitters** - Extensive experience with all ages of children and have CPR & First Aid Certifications
- ✓ **Our Sitters Don't Just Sit** - All sitters are over 18 and arrive with age-appropriate activities ready to interact and play with your children

Mention Katy Magazine & Get \$10.00 Off
Your First Babysitting Event!

SeekingSitters®
Easy, Safe Babysitting Solutions

(281) 224-3418

Visit us online for membership and pricing information.

www.seekingsitters.com

Locally Owned & Operated.

Featured on **abc CBS® CNN FOX NBC**

