



Four generations of Cardiff family members pictured in front of the original Cardiff family home on 6th St. and Avenue C

# THE CARDIFF FAMILY

WITH OVER 116 YEARS OF KATY PRIDE, THE CARDIFFS REFLECT ON WHAT KATY USED TO BE LIKE AND HOW IT HAS EVOLVED TO THE CITY IT IS TODAY

*Written by Lorrie Crow Kimble | Select photography by Myra Nwoke*

Lynn Cardiff describes Katy in 1955 as a very small town with numerous fields of rice blowing in the wind. Her and her husband Hal have now lived in Katy for 86 years. The Cardiff family home, across from Katy Elementary School, is still the same as it was when Hal was a boy. It is now owned by the fourth generation of C.C. Cardiff. There have been six generations of the Cardiff family living in and around Katy with a junior high school named after them.

“We are indeed proud and humbled by this great honor. I believe that the main reason the Katy ISD board and the citizens of Katy found the Cardiffs to be worthy of this wonderful honor is because of the pioneering spirit of the first Cardiff, Hal’s father, who came to Katy in 1929 to produce rice and to raise his family,” says Lynn.

## THE ROARING KATY TIGERS

Hal was the quarterback for the first 11-man football team at Katy High School. Before then, Katy had only a six-man team, but in 1945, the school organized its first 11-man Katy Tiger football team with Hal as quarterback, coached by C.O. Chandler. “We were nothing like the Katy Tigers today, but we tried hard. We didn’t even have enough men to have a separate offensive or defensive team. When I wasn’t playing quarterback, I was playing defensive linebacker,” Hal recalls.

Hal’s son-in-law, Micky Lang Thompson, was the offensive coach for the Katy Tigers for eight years from 2007 to 2014, and helped win State Championships in 2007, 2008, 2012, and 2015. Micky’s son, Crockett Wayne Thompson, played

for the Katy Tigers when they won the 2008 State Championship.

### BACK IN THE DAY

Lynn describes growing up in Katy like watching re-runs of a John Wayne movie. “The land was open and ready for cattle, horses, and rice. Streets were made of packed soil that became mud when it rained and the storefronts were as typical as any western movie,” she says. There was, and still is, a brick store on the corner of downtown Katy that was the bank building that was robbed back in the day.

Katy was, at one time, one of the largest rice-producing towns in the U.S. with the Cardiff family as one of the biggest and most-respected rice producers in Katy. “Hal’s father farmed over 2,000 acres of rice. Katy was perfect for producing rice with its flat land, rich soil, and large amounts of water just under the land. The Cardiffs built two of the landmark rice dryers, with one still seen from Brookshire reaching up in the sky when traveling west from Houston.” The Cardiff families were also pioneers in water leveling, producing rice with fewer levies to make across the rice fields.

Today, Katy is a busy town with over 16,000 people in Historic Katy. However, the Cardiff family is proud of the direction Katy is taking with the construction of the new City Hall. “It shows vision in a new Katy,” says Lynn. “It’s one that will remain long after the old town has gone away to give way to new buildings that will hold the flavor of the old. Katy is here to stay.” KM

LORRIE CROW KIMBLE taught at Katy High School from 1985 to 1987 and is well-aware of the pride of the Katy Tigers.

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### CARDIFF FAMILY FACTS

- The Cardiffs settled in Katy in the 1900s
- Cardiff family members have served the community as city councilmen, school trustees, and teachers for the last nine decades
- They are a Katy namesake for Cardiff Junior High School
- Hal and his brother Charles were president of the Katy Heritage Society
- Hal Cardiff served as president of the school board in 1964

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