



Donna and Joe Adams



Rebecca and Dean Fox
with their children,
Jordan and Micaela



David and Chris Crockett and
her mother, Elinor Schuller



Peggy and Neal Howard with their children,
Grace, Ned, Hank, and Amy Claire

Photo by Tracy Owen

A+ Passion for Education

Family-oriented and Katy focused, these busy executives, business owners, and super volunteers make the most important education decisions in our community.

Written by Shetye Cypher

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The seven-member Katy ISD school board serves as the district's policy-making body and its trustees work hard to represent the people of Katy ISD regarding educational matters. These individual board members, who serve without pay, also have remarkable lives that go beyond school matters. Their leadership and dedication to the community can be seen in every facet of their lives.

Get to know the faces and many facets of the people who serve on Katy ISD's Board of Trustees



Judith Snyder
President

Judy Snyder has lived in Katy for 31 years and serves as president of the school board. She has volunteered in her son's schools from elementary through high school, serving in various positions, including PTO

president and a member of the CAT and blue ribbon advisory teams. She was later asked to assist with the original long-range plan for the school district, known as the Katy Plan. While serving on the school board, she has been president, secretary, treasurer, vice president, and sergeant at arms. Snyder was also selected to participate in Leadership Texas Association of School Boards' (TASB) year-long program to become a master trustee.

"I grew up in Houston, Texas," says Snyder. "I witnessed the transformation of an oil town to a metropolis. I saw Houston rise to the top in medicine, space, the arts, and industry to become a major metropolitan area, while becoming a place for all people."

In her free time, Snyder loves to cook and secretly wants to be a chef – she even has a certificate from Le Cordon Bleu. She adds that her blue crab jumbo lump crab cakes are to die for. In her professional life, she has a Bachelor of Science from Texas Tech University and has worked in medical research, moving to marketing and shipping in the oil-related industry. She is now vice president and general manager of a scholar-

ship management company. "I enjoy seeing our young men and women succeed in pursuit of their education, being their 'mother' away from home, and then wishing them well as they return to their country to successfully contribute to society," Snyder shares. "I have enjoyed working with colleagues in our sister companies in the U.K., Brazil, and Portugal."

Snyder also serves on the HCC Katy Business Community Steering Committee and has served on various boards, including the board for Susan G. Komen Foundation in Houston. "I have volunteered for about everything I can think of related to the district," she says.

Snyder has a son who is a captain for a major airline, along with a granddaughter. "We are a very close family and enjoy getting together for any occasion, especially the Fourth of July at our beach house for some of my mother's special seafood gumbo," she says. "My family is extremely important to me." Snyder has definitely lived a full life. She has been on an oil

rig in the Gulf, christened a ship, been invited to witness a shuttle launch at the cape, competed in the Miss Lubbock pageant while she was at Texas Tech, and served as the Houston chairman for the Race for the Cure.

Over the years, she has enjoyed seeing Katy grow and change with the times. "I have enjoyed seeing the Katy area grow up, while not losing the integrity of a small town," she says. "The Katy Area Economic Development Council and the Chamber of Commerce

have done a phenomenal job of promoting our area and bringing business and industry to the Katy area. These organizations and our outstanding school district make a powerful team to ensure the continued growth and success of the Katy area."

"I have enjoyed seeing the Katy area grow up, while not losing the integrity of a small town."

- Judith Snyder



Rebecca Fox Vice President

Rebecca Fox, has lived in Katy for 12 years and enjoys its small-town feeling. “My husband’s job brought us to the Houston area, and we chose Katy because of the school district’s reputation,” says Fox. “Our children had been in five previous school districts, so we knew right away that Katy ISD was,

indeed, exceptional. Because our children were getting such an extraordinary education, we decided not to relocate again.”

Married for 26 years, Fox has two children, Jordan, a 2006 graduate of Cinco Ranch High School and a 2010 graduate of Texas A&M, where he studied to become a mechanical engineer; and Micaela, a graduate of Seven Lakes High School and a current student at the Mays School of Business at Texas A&M University.

Like Snyder, Fox has also served in many volunteer positions, including PTA leadership positions at elementary, junior high, and high schools, a member of the district’s re-zoning and bond committees, and a member of the VIPs Executive Board. She also spent lots of hours inside the classrooms as a substitute teacher and was recently selected as volunteer of the year at Cinco Ranch High School.

“Friends began asking me to consider running for the school board, because of my broad knowledge and exposure,” says Fox. “After prayer and consideration, I offered my service to the community as a candidate for trustee. That was six years ago, and it has been a blessing to be a part of the success of Katy ISD.” Fox recently spent a year becoming certified as a master trustee.

Her adventurous life has sometimes taken her beyond Katy, where she has dedicated so much time and energy. She has lived

in six different countries and has ridden a camel, elephant, helicopter, ship, and rickshaw. Her husband’s job included 12 years of international work, which allowed them to travel extensively.

Fox currently works part-time as a motivational speaker, humorist, and parent educator. “I enjoy being able to encourage and entertain people while helping them learn and grow,” she says. “Making people laugh brings me joy. I sometimes perform stand-up comedy at coffee houses and church gatherings.”

Throughout the years, she has found it rewarding to see Katy grow and prosper. “Another part of my life for which I am deeply grateful is working beside so, so many selfless people in the Katy community and helping Katy grow into a place with a strong reputation desired by the thousands of people who choose to bring their families here every year,” says Fox.

“The churches, businesses, schools, organizations, and activities that have been added in the 12 years our family has been here have greatly enriched our community. It is not something I take credit for or call an accomplishment, but it is something I am grateful to be a part of.”

Another part of my life for which I am deeply grateful is working beside so, so many selfless people in the Katy community and helping Katy grow into a place with a strong reputation desired by the thousands of people who choose to bring their families here every year.

—Rebecca Fox

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Chris Crockett Secretary

Chris Crockett, has lived in Katy for 10 years after her husband's job transferred them to the west Houston area. "We were living in McKinney at the time, and one of my son's teachers recommended the Katy area, specifically Memorial Park-way Junior High," she says. "We also looked at Cy-Fair and Spring Branch school districts, but found that the programs offered in Katy best suited my son's and daughter's needs."

Her husband, David is a completions engineer specializing in deep water, high pressure wells, who consults for Murphy Oil, BP (during the Deepwater Horizon crisis), and Chevron. Her son, Tom, graduated from Taylor High School in 2006 and received his undergraduate degree from Texas A&M University this past May. He is currently doing graduate work in physics at Washington University in St. Louis, and hopes to teach at the college level. Her daughter, Elin, is a 2009 graduate of Taylor, and is currently a sophomore at the University of Texas and is studying science, as well as writing. "Elin is a talented jazz saxophonist, and her combo played throughout her senior year in high school, mostly at Orleans Seafood Kitchen, but also at other venues around the area," says Crockett. "They have a core group of fans who anxiously await school breaks when the band reunites."

Since moving to Katy, Crockett has volunteered on the campus level, as well as at the district level, serving as a PTA and booster organization committee chair, CAT team member, and Katy Parents of Gifted and Talented officer and bond committee member. She also attended Leadership Katy, which exposed her to the inner workings of the business side of the district. "A terrific cross section of personalities, life experiences, and aspirations is represented here in Katy," Crockett shares. "Everyone is so different,

yet there is much common ground between all of us. It's these shared values that make Katy so strong and give us a feeling of community."

Crockett is on the West Houston P-16 Council and the Board of Directors of ArtReach. She sings with One-A-Chord and the St. Peter's UMC women's ensemble. Both groups serve the area by performing at nursing and retirement facilities. Crockett also mentors three children at three different campuses. Before having children of her own, she practiced law involving estate planning and probate matters. When her children were small, they moved overseas and her focus changed to volunteer work.

She is passionate about Katy and its continued development. "If we change what makes Katy, Katy, I think we won't grow," she says. "It's our strong values and community-mindedness that makes people want to come here. My hope is that as we grow in population, we will grow our identity as a community, as well."

She adds, "I think one of the most exciting things going on right now is the work being done by the Katy Area Placemakers committee, which is basically working on creating a Katy label. By labeling where the greater Katy area is and what the community stands for, we will reach a level of maturity as a community that will give us definition and allow us to go to the next level, whatever that may be, while still reflecting the core values that make us who we are today."



Chris Crockett and her mother, Elinor Schuller



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Robert Shaw Treasurer

Robert Shaw has lived in Katy since 1976 with his wife, Cindy and together, they raised all three of their children in the Katy community. "We watched them make their way through the school system, staying involved with their activities as much as possible," says Shaw.

"We were quite impressed in what we saw and very pleased that we had picked Katy as our home. It was this hard-working, successful, dedicated school system that I eventually decided to serve."

All three of his children attended Katy High School. His son, Chuck is currently employed by Boeing, his daughter, Allison is currently employed at the Cottage Door in Katy, and his son, Jeffrey is employed by Cronus Technology. Shaw has one grandchild and one on the way.

"Having lived in Katy for a little over 34 years, I have been blessed with developing and maintaining long-term relationships with many local Katy patrons," says Shaw. "Katy is a strong, faith-based community."

After graduating from Oklahoma State University, Shaw accepted a job at Newport News Shipbuilding and Drydock Company. His first assignment was completing design work on the aircraft carrier, Nimitz. While there, he met his wife. "A co-worker set me up on a blind date with a girl in nursing school at Portsmouth General by the name of Cindy," he shares. "We were married a year later."

He is proud of his community and school district, seeing first hand all the heart and dedication put in to each by students, teachers, volunteers, friends, and neighbors. "So much is involved in making what happens in the classroom a success," says Shaw. "We have great teachers to start with. They have great support staff members who help make success happen. I only wish the general public could see all the hard work that goes on, that I have the opportunity to see, that really makes Katy ISD the great district it is."

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Joe and Donna Adams with their family, Brian and Jessica Simpson with their son, Marshall, and Casey and Courtney Adams



Joe Adams
Sergeant at Arms

Joe Adams has served as a member of the Katy school board since 1989 and has lived in the Katy area since 1986. "Katy is a great place to live and to educate children," he says. "We are seeing our growth continue, while many areas are declining. The district

is an absolute draw to folks that move here and those in the city that move out."

Adams owns two businesses, Budget Blinds of Houston and Bluebonnet Painting and Renovation. Between managing personnel and working on business projects, he keeps a busy schedule. "I really like being involved with people and seeing a great-looking final product when we finish," says Adams. "I would like to see more businesses come to Katy to contribute to our tax base and help relieve homeowners of the tax burdens we all face. We all need to support one another as we weather this economic downturn in ways that are positive to the community and the district."

He and his wife, Donna, belong to Kingsland Baptist Church, where he serves as a deacon and leads a Sunday school class. His two children, Jessica and Casey both graduated from Taylor High School. Adams has one grandson, and both of his children are married with more grandchildren on the way.

In his spare time, Adams enjoys flying his Cessna 182. In the community, he helps support Katy Christian Ministries and the Pregnancy Help Center. He is also a director with the Gulf Coast Area Association of School Boards and serves as chairman of the board of the Southern Federal Credit Union.

An Aggie at heart, Adams went to Texas A&M University, where he was in the Corps of Cadets and a trombone player in the Aggie Band. He and his family have lived in London two separate times, as well as Cairo, Egypt, and are happy to call Katy home. "I have traveled to over 50 countries while working in the oil and gas business and can only say that there is so much to be thankful for living in Katy, Texas," he shares.

Donna and Joe Adams have lived in Katy since 1986



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Eric Duhon *Trustee*

Eric Duhon has been a Katy ISD school board member since 1999 and has lived in Katy since 1993. He works as global director of data center technologies for BG Group. As part of his job, he is responsible for the compute platforms in 27 countries and travels between the U.K., U.S., and Australia.

He has been married to his wife, Sheryl since 1981 and has four adult children, Brandon, Joseph, Megan, and Joshua. His oldest daughter, Angie, has already passed. His three younger children are graduates of Katy High School. Duhon takes pride in seeing how Katy's great community and schools have progressed over the years. "Katy will continue to grow and change," he says. "The diversity within Katy will keep it interesting. Our biggest challenge will be to maintain the culture that is Katy, while allowing much more influence from diverse populations as they become active participants."

Duhon was born in Louisiana as one of 12 children and considers himself very much a part of that culture. However, after being in Texas for more than 29 years, he considers himself a true Texan, too. "My parents were indeed rare, as they truly loved each other and stuck with each other through very trying times as they raised 12 children during the 50s through the 70s," he shares. "Growing up in the middle of this family was not as traumatic as the writers would have us believe - mom had enough love for all of us. My father was one of those men who fought in World War II, but remained steadfast in his beliefs and values."

As Duhon reaches retirement age, he finds himself spending more time on planning and less on community involvement,

with the exception of volunteering as a school board member, which he very much enjoys. "I am blessed with a sense of humor as those close to me will attest," he shares. "I love all people and find something unique in everyone I meet. Making people comfortable and having fun is at the core of my existence. It may sound weird, but attending graduations and seeing the hundreds of young adults ready to move on to their new lives and knowing that I played a small part in that adventure makes me proud to have served."

In the past, he has served on the board of Katy American Little League, been a Scoutmaster, was lay leader in his church Katy First United Methodist, and has supported activities such as band, athletics, FFA, rodeo, and other school-related activities. "We have enjoyed much success as a community and a school district and we must ensure the next generation of leaders is well-versed about the history to enable good decisions about our future," says Duhon. "Diverse opinions among intelligent participants will always drive to better solutions. Educated citizens participating in the process will ensure the integrity and future are protected. I believe in the citizenry of Katy and know they will keep us moving forward."



Sheryl and Eric Duhon and their children, Joshua and Megan

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Neal Howard Trustee

Neal Howard has lived in Katy for 16 years after Exxon transferred him from Midland to Houston in 1994. As a licensed petroleum engineer in business development at Occidental Petroleum, he works with people whose goal is to acquire oil and gas properties. A native of Houston, he graduated from Rice University with an engineering degree and from the University of Virginia with a Master's in business administration.

He loves life in Katy with his wife, and has found it a great place to raise their four children. "I am blessed with an awesome family," Howard shares. "My wife is involved in several prayer ministries and is a Stephen minister at our church. We have four children. Two have graduated from Cinco Ranch High School and are off at college, one is at CRHS, and another is at Cinco Ranch Junior High."

In his free time, he referees high school basketball games for the Rice Belt Basketball Chapter of the Texas Association of Sports Officials and helps cover games from Waller down to Wharton and out to Columbus. He is a huge fan of the movie, *Monty Python and the Holy Grail*. "I have the script," he shares.

He enjoys volunteering in the community and met his wife while working with an organization in Midland. "My wife and I serve on the Katy Area Young Life Committee," he says. "We met as volunteer leaders while in Midland and have both been involved with Young Life since high school. I place great value on providing opportunities for young people to contribute to society and feel that public schools have a unique ability to contribute to that development." **KM**

SHETYE CYPHER is a freelance writer who enjoys life in Katy with her family. She has written for several local publications and is a journalism teacher and publications advisor at Mayde Creek High School.

MEETINGS OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Regular Board of Trustees business meetings are open to the public and are usually held at 6:30 p.m. the fourth Monday of the month in the board room of the Education Support Complex at 301 S. Stadium Ln.

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