



TEXAS GENERAL LAND OFFICE
GEORGE P. BUSH, COMMISSIONER

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PRESS RELEASE

Stephen F. Austin upsets Sam Houston's drive for three-peat in 2018 Top Texan Tournament

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AUSTIN — Commissioner George P. Bush today announced that Stephen F. Austin was voted the Top Texan in Texas History for 2018, pulling off what many would consider an upset over Sam Houston, who won the annual spring bracket two years in a row.

"Stephen F. Austin is revered as the Father of Texas for good reason," said Commissioner George P. Bush. "He was a pioneer in his day, undertaking the painstaking work of colonizing Texas and building a nation from wilderness. Today his legacy includes yet another victory: winner of the 2018 Top Texan competition."

Started in 2016, the Top Texan Tournament was designed to encourage Texans of all ages to learn more about some of our state's most important historical figures in a fun and interactive way, and raise awareness of the Save Texas History program. A total of 2,353 votes were cast online. Each of the 64 contenders are nominated by the public and a bracket-building committee in the Texas General Land Office Archives staff.

Stephen F. Austin received 235 total votes in this year's online bracket, besting other such Texas luminaries in the Final Four as William B. Travis, the commander of the Alamo and author of the famous "Victory or Death" letter, Audie Murphy, the most decorated American soldier of World War II, and revolutionary hero Sam Houston, former President and Governor of the Republic and state of Texas, who was the two-time winner of the Top Texan Tournament. Among the many other Texas figures who appeared in the 64-person bracket were Adina de Zavala, Barbara Jordan, Bessie Johnson, Juan Seguin, James Earl Rudder, Willie Nelson, Selena and Jane McAllum.

"While rivals in the Top Texan tournament, in life Sam Houston demonstrated great respect for Stephen F. Austin," noted James Harkins, Director of Public Services for the GLO's Archives and Records. "Upon hearing of Austin's death, Houston remarked, 'The Father of Texas is no more.' Austin's quiet, competent, earnest, and thoughtful leadership contributed greatly to the establishment of Texas as we know it today."

Austin's 'Top Texan' bona fides are as well-known as they are impressive - he honored his father's dying request by establishing his colony in Texas, frequently traveled to Mexico City to fight for the rights and well-being of his colonists, and suffered solitary confinement in a Mexican prison before returning to his colony and to service in Texas' provisional government. Stephen F. Austin is clearly deserving of the title 'Top Texan'.

"Texas doesn't just have history - we have legend," said Commissioner Bush. "From the heroes of the Alamo to the cattle ranchers who drove longhorns up the Chisholm Trail to feed America, to the wildcatters who dug deep into the desolate sands of West Texas and found black gold - Texans have proved throughout history that what happens here changes the world. This Top Texan Tournament is a chance for all Texans to learn about these legends whose contributions to history made our state great."

About Save Texas History

Created in 2004, the Save Texas History program is a statewide initiative to rally public support and private funding for the preservation and promotion of the historic maps and documents housed in the GLO Archives, and serves as a resource for teaching and digitizing Texas history. If you would like to donate to the Save Texas History program to adopt a document or collection, assist with archival acquisitions, develop educational programs, or support digital projects, please visit SaveTexasHistory.org.

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