

## Abbott's veto of Legislature a historic abuse

**W**e celebrate the Fourth of July as our breakaway move from a king who did more harm than good. Eventually, the Founding Fathers devised the three-branch system of government.

That's why Gov. Greg Abbott's decision to veto every penny meant to run the Texas Legislature starting in September is so tyrannical. My columnist colleague

THE WATCHDOG



**DAVE LIEBER**

watchdog@dallasnews.com  
dallasnews.com/watchdog

Gromer Jeffers Jr. wrote in a piece that it was "diabolical but deft" because it could force

the Democrats to stick around and not kill a quorum during a special session.

The veto, if it stands, would cost 2,000 state employees their salaries and health benefits for two years. Both parties are affected.

How dictatorial of you, Gov. Abbott. The only thing missing here is Mussolini's balcony.

Texas political historian Brandon Rottinghaus, a University of Houston professor

who grew up in Plano, told *Dallas Morning News* reporter Allie Morris, "We've seen governors fight with the Legislature over budget issues, and there have been times where governors played hardball. We've never seen a governor try to liquidate another branch of government."

I wondered how Abbott's disgusting veto ranks among the worst acts by Texas governors. I checked with professor

Rottinghaus for ideas and then researched Texas governors going back to the very first one in 1685 under French rule. Here are my findings.

**Fernando Perez de Almazan** didn't want the job, which he was appointed to in 1722 under Spanish rule. He wrote Spanish leaders that he was sick and tired and wanted to quit. Nobody responded. He appointed a lieutenant gover-

nor. Then one day, without telling anyone, he quit. He got on his horse and rode off into the sunset, out of the Texas territory toward Mexico.

**Angel de Martos y Navarrete** served seven years starting in 1759. He was a morale-breaker, took a thousand percent profit on goods delivered to his fort and used soldiers to

See **ABBOTT'S** Page 2B

**DOWNTOWN DALLAS**

### Banners celebrate one-liners from former Gov. Ann Richards



Photos by Ben Torres/Special Contributor

**A banner displays** a quote by former Gov. Ann Richards along Akard Street near Dallas City Hall. About 60 of the banners featuring 12 designs will be displayed downtown through September to celebrate the 30th anniversary of Richards' inauguration.

**FEDERAL COURTS**

## Ex-mayor, developer on trial again

Political bribery case involving votes for money, sex begins anew Tuesday

By **KEVIN KRAUSE**  
Staff Writer  
kkrause@dallasnews.com

It was a novel approach for a political bribery case.

Prosecutors told jurors that one of the benefits a developer gave a former Richardson mayor in exchange for votes was sex.

Jurors agreed with the government and convicted the ex-mayor, Laura Jordan, and her lover-turned-husband, Mark Jordan, on nearly all counts after just a day and a half of deliberation. Nevertheless, the salacious details of their illicit romance and alleged corrupt plotting will once again be chronicled inside a Sherman courtroom.

That's because of a court security officer's careless remark to a distraught and undecided juror hours before the verdict. It resulted in the judge throwing out the 2019 conviction and ordering a new trial. The juror had been a holdout, and the defense argued she was improperly swayed by the officer.

U.S. District Judge Amos Mazzant agreed and granted the defense motion for a new trial, a decision later upheld by the Fifth Circuit following an appeal by the government. Opening statements in the retrial of the Jordans, who married during the controversy, are scheduled to begin Tuesday.

Based on recent court filings, the government does not appear to be changing its core strategy that resulted in success on the first go-around. Except for the addition of four tax counts, the evidence and testimony is expected to be similar if not identical to the previous trial, which lasted more than three weeks.

The U.S. attorney's office declined to comment, and defense attorneys in the case could not be reached.

Dan Guthrie, a former federal and state prosecutor who is now in private practice in Dallas, said a retrial gives the defense an advantage.

"They have already seen everything the government is going to use against them," he said. "The second time around, there shouldn't be any

See **POLITICAL** Page 4B

## A way for her words to live on

By **MICHAEL GRANBERRY**  
Staff Writer  
mgranberry@dallasnews.com

The late Ann Richards served as governor of Texas from 1991 to 1995, gracing us with multiple memorable one-liners. Heck, she was even the subject of a Broadway play — *Ann*, by Holland Taylor.

Now, downtown Dallas is paying tribute to the late, great Ann. No fewer than 60 "Ann Banners" have been installed along Main, Akard and Young streets, no farther than a bouffant and a can of hairspray from City Hall. The artwork shows 12 designs featuring photos and quotes from the one-of-a-kind Texas governor.

Here are some of our favorite Annisms as depicted on the banners:  
"Ginger Rogers did everything Fred Astaire did, she just did it backwards

"She inspired and mentored so many young Texans, like me, to pursue our dreams, stay engaged in public service and always give back."

**Ron Kirk**, former Dallas mayor

and in high heels."  
"Cherish your friends and family as if your life depended on it, because it does."

"Teaching was the hardest work I had ever done, including being Governor of Texas."

"I get a lot of cracks about my hair,

See **BANNERS** Page 2B



**One of the Richards banners** is on display along Young Street in downtown Dallas. The gregarious, oft-quoted governor served as Texas' leader from 1991 to 1995.

**INVASIVE SPECIES**

## Weird worms slithering among us

Cut the creature, and it regrows! Oh, and it also secretes toxins!

By **PRAVEENA SOMASUNDARAM**  
Staff Writer  
praveena.somasundaram@dallasnews.com

The advisory, in all capital letters, warned of a peril lurking right in your backyard — a danger that seemed straight from a monster movie:

"DON'T CHOP IT UP!!! EVERY PIECE WILL REPRODUCE!!"

The Facebook post — with that alert and a picture of an alien-looking worm, citing the worrisome named Texas Invasive Species Institute — was bound to go viral.

And it's true that if the hammerhead flatworm is cut, it will regrow. Also true: The worm has made its way to North Texas, and it's more

common than many people realized.

The worm, which has piled up tens of thousands of views and shares since it was posted last week on Facebook, was found in a Dallas backyard.

At first glance, it looks like an ordinary worm you'd see after a rainy day. A closer look at the animal — and at the facts about the invasive invertebrate — shows it is anything but.

Ashley Morgan-Olvera, research director for the Invasive Species Institute, said the hammerhead flatworm is a hermaphroditic species, which means it has male and female organs and can reproduce on its own.

Some people who watched the viral video assumed the worm shown was the first one spotted in North Texas. But

See **STRANGE** Page 2B



### The Dallas Morning News CHARITIES

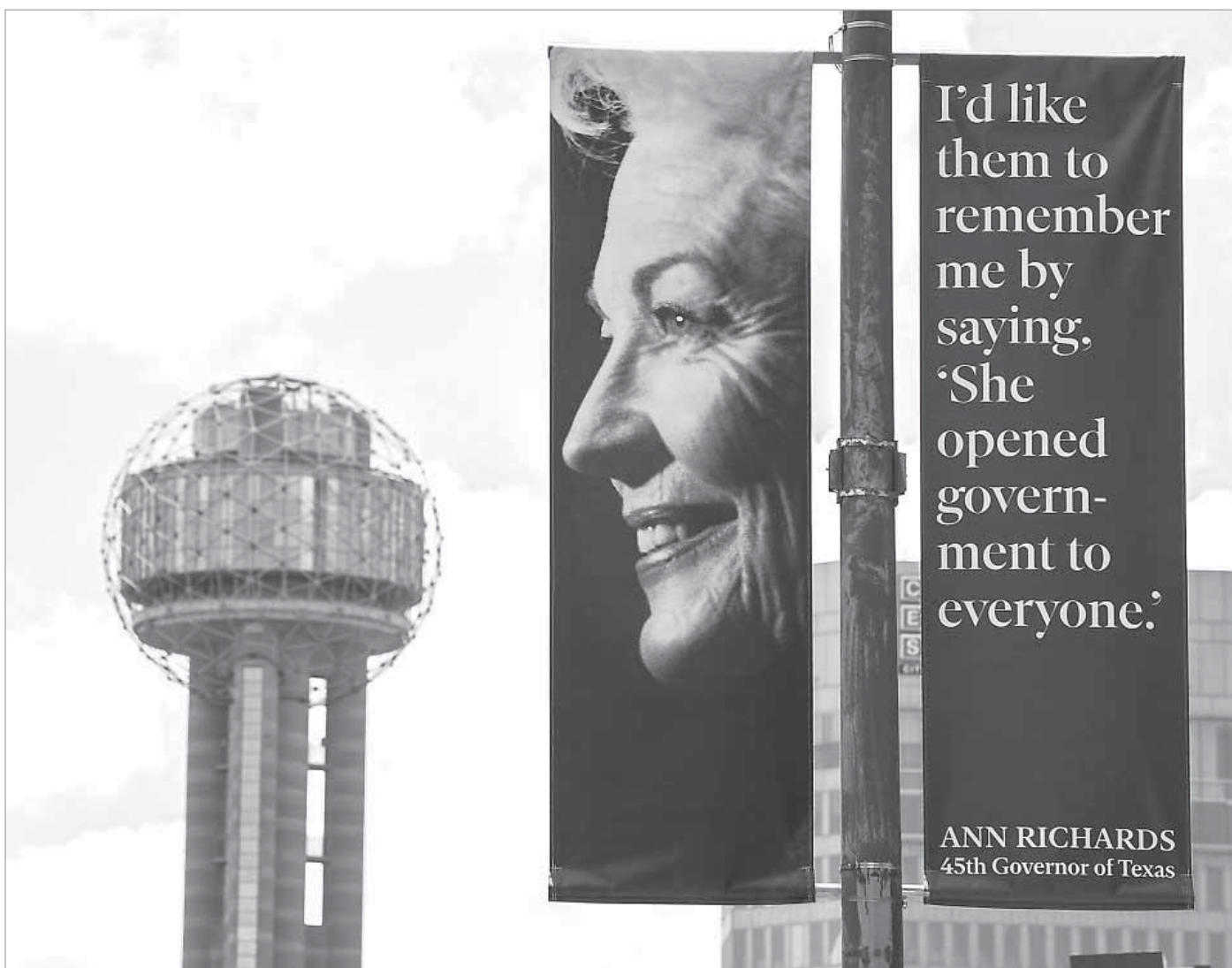
The Dallas Morning News is collecting money for distribution to nine agencies that help feed hungry children during the summer in North Texas. Charities will receive 100% of all donations.

Number of donors  
**262**  
Total collected  
**\$150,457**

Please send your check or money order payable to:  
**The Dallas Morning News Charities**  
5500 Caruth Haven Lane  
Dallas, Texas 75225-8146  
Phone: 214.346.5546

Credit card donations are accepted at [dmncharities.com](http://dmncharities.com) and at **214.346.5546**

Follow the campaign on Instagram and Twitter at [@DMNcharities](https://twitter.com/DMNcharities) or on Facebook at [facebook.com/DMNcharities](https://facebook.com/DMNcharities)



Ben Torres/Special Contributor

A banner on Young Street celebrates former Texas Gov. Ann Richards. Margaret Justus, who worked as Richards' deputy press secretary from 1989 to 1994, says banners also are being displayed in Austin and will soon go up in Houston.

## Banners celebrate Richards' words

Continued from Page 1B

mostly from men who don't have any."

"You can put lipstick on a pig and call it Monique, but it is still a pig."

Margaret Justus, who worked as Gov. Richards' deputy press secretary from 1989 to 1994, tells us the art project "would not have happened had it not been for the pandemic. Normally, we folks who worked for the governor and loved her would have gathered in person to celebrate the 30th year" — meaning the 30th anniversary of Richards' inauguration as

governor — "but this year, it was impossible."

So, Justus says, *The Ann Banners* "turned out to be a safe, inspiring and joyous solution. That's why I founded the Ann Richards Legacy Project this past spring to share them with the rest of the state. We are hoping to have them up in downtown Houston in a couple of weeks." The display opened in Austin in March, during Women's History Month, and will remain in place in the capital city through November. The banners will remain in downtown Dallas through September.

Justus says Richards "still holds the record for appointing the most women, folks of color, LGBTQ community members and people with disabilities to state boards and agencies than any other Texas governor."

Ron Kirk, who served as Richards' secretary of state from 1992 to 1993 and later became Dallas' first Black mayor, calls Richards "a great American trailblazer. She inspired and mentored so many young Texans, like me, to pursue our dreams, stay engaged in public service and always give back."

Richards began her political career in Dallas during the

1960s, volunteering in numerous campaigns and working as an activist to fight the poll tax, which she believed made it harder for poor people to vote.

At the time of her death in 2006, Richards' partner for years had been Edwin "Bud" Shrake, who during the 1960s was a sports columnist for *The Dallas Morning News* before moving on to become a member of Texas' literary elite, as an author of fiction and nonfiction, including multiple biographies. What a pair they made.

Twitter: @mgranberry

### NORTH TEXAS

## 2 area youths in national spelling finals

By ANNA CAPLAN  
Special Contributor

Two of the 11 finalists for this year's Scripps National Spelling Bee hail from North Texas.

Vivinsha Veduru, 10, was a fifth-grader at Keller's Bear Creek Intermediate School this year; Dhroov Bharatia, 12, attends Wilson Middle School in Plano, where he just finished seventh grade.

At age 10, Vivinsha is the youngest competitor — by two years — among the finalists.

Vivinsha and Dhroov competed against 207 other contestants from across the country over the course of three virtual rounds. The semifinal, which featured 30 spellers,

was held over three rounds last Sunday.

"Congratulations to all of this year's 209 national qualifiers — they've persevered over a year that has been challenging in many ways, and our team is proud to have witnessed their journey," J. Michael Durnil, executive director of the bee, said in a statement.

On March 9, Vivinsha won the virtual 2021 TCU Regional Spelling Bee, successfully spelling 39 out of 50 words correct within a 30-minute time limit.

Dhroov earned the highest score at the regional competition in March at the 2021 Dallas Regional Spelling Bee.



Keller ISD

Vivinsha Veduru, 10, is one of two North Texas finalists headed to the Scripps National Spelling Bee in Florida.

This year's final will be televised Thursday on ESPN from the ESPN Wide World of Sports Complex at the Walt Disney World Resort in Florida.

## Strange worm is nothing new to North Texas

Continued from Page 1B

it's not.

### Reports flood in

Since the institute began tracking the hammerhead flatworm through submitted reports about three years ago, most sightings have been in coastal areas of Texas. Only a few had been reported in Dallas-Fort Worth before last week.

However, since the Facebook post began to spread, Morgan-Olvera said she had received several hundred reports of the hammerhead flatworm from people in Dallas-Fort Worth, with at least 80 sightings in Dallas County.

"Now, with the overwhelming amount of the overweh-received, we realize they are pretty widespread in North Texas," she said.

The species, which originated in Southeast Asia, may have spread across the area as peo-



Texas Invasive Species Institute/

**The hammerhead flatworm**, from Southeast Asia, made a splash on social media.

ple transported mulch, soil and plants.

Morgan-Olvera said the worms are harmful because they prey on earthworms, which are important to ecosystems.

Earthworms decompose dead and organic matter and recycle nutrients into soil.

According to the Natural Resources Conservation Service, the presence of earth-

worms generally indicates a healthy soil system.

### Multiple risks

The hammerhead species, which can grow to about a foot long, can also pose a risk to humans, Morgan-Olvera said. The worm secretes a neurotoxin that can cause skin irritation for some people.

That's one reason the institute recommends using gloves and thoroughly washing your hands when disposing of the worms.

The flatworms also can spread parasites to mammals, including dogs, cats and humans.

"We tell people, don't pick it up with your bare hands," Morgan-Olvera said. "If you see it, please dispose of it properly."

Megan Dittmer, a Calloway's Nursery manager, said she hadn't received questions from customers about the hammerhead flatworm recently.

But the invasive species isn't

new to her. She noticed a few of them when she was replanting in the garden of her Wylie home last year.

Dittmer's experience disposing of the worms was painless.

"I've handled them personally, and I've never had any issues," she said.

The experts say the flatworms can be killed with a spray of citrus oil and white vinegar — 1 ounce of citrus oil for every half-gallon of 10% to 20% white vinegar should be sprayed on the worms. Soaking them in vinegar or saltwater also will kill them. They also can be frozen to death in 24 to 48 hours, but be sure to seal them tightly in a bag or they can crawl away, the institute warns.

People should watch out for invasive flatworms when they bring new plants into their yards. To report sightings of the hammerhead flatworm, send photos to Morgan-Olvera at arm001@shsu.edu.

Twitter: @praveenavsoma

DAVE LIEBER

## Abbott's act up there among Texas' worst

Continued from Page 1B

run his farm.

He also was accused of burning down a fort to rout a political enemy. The investigation and trial for this lasted 14 years. He was found guilty and given a huge fine.

Anson Jones served beginning in 1844, when



ANSON JONES

Texas was a republic. Jones ran for president but didn't make a single speech because

campaigning was against his principles. He was elected the fifth and final president of Texas.

Upon his inauguration, he declared "the Republic of Texas is no more." He lowered the Lone Star flag, then retired to his plantation. But that's not what earned him a spot on this list.

For years, he wished the Texas Legislature would appoint him as a U.S. senator, but because of his principles, he didn't ask for the job. He brooded about this for 12 years.

He didn't take rejection well. In 1858, he took his life.

Edmund Jackson Davis may well be the worst of all Texas governors. He served



EDMUND DAVIS

starting in 1870. He was called an arrogant dictator,

historian Ross Phares wrote in his book *Texas Governors*.

"Intimidation, inefficiency, extravagance and corruption were the order of the day," he wrote.

Davis had his own goon squad called State Police

going after enemies. These officers "occasionally murdered individuals for seemingly no reason," one historian wrote. Another historian called Davis' administration "a carnival of crimes."

Davis lost his reelection in 1873, but he refused to give up his office. He barricaded himself on the first floor of the Capitol, asking President U.S. Grant for federal troops. On the second floor, the Legislature and new governor went about the state's business.

When troops were de-

nied, the standoff ended. Texas went back to only one governor.



JAMES 'PA' FERGUSON MIRIAM 'MA' FERGUSON

James E. Ferguson served starting in 1915. Books have been written about Pa Ferguson and his wife, Miriam Ferguson, known as Ma. She succeeded him as Texas' first woman governor.

Pa was the only Texas governor who was impeached and tossed out of office. His wife served as governor from 1925 to 1927 and again from 1933 to 1935.

They were crooks whose most egregious acts were pardoning 3,000 prisoners in exchange for payoffs.

Everybody knew Pa was the true governor. Ma even said Texas was getting two governors for the price of one. His desk was next to hers.

Preston E. Smith was governor during the Sharpstown scandal in the early



PRESTON SMITH

1970s, which involved stock manipulation. It cost Smith and many legislators their jobs.

Lawmakers traded votes on bills sought by Houston businessman Frank Sharp for stock shares.

"Let he who is without stock cast the first rock," Smith once joked.

In a court case, the governor was listed as an unindicted co-conspirator.

How does Abbott compare? He hasn't barricaded himself in his office or released prisoners for money or quit to ride off into the sunset.

But what he's done is the most anti-democratic gesture he has undertaken. Governors have power. For this Fourth of July, it's a reminder not to abuse it for political purposes.

Frankly, the veto action Abbott took is not only diabolical and deft. It's quite unpatriotic.

Twitter: @DaveLieber

### PUBLIC SAFETY BRIEFS

#### ARLINGTON

**Police: Man killed by driver who fled officers, ran light**

A man was fatally struck by a driver suspected of running a red light while fleeing officers Friday night, Arlington police said.

A Pantego officer attempted to execute a traffic stop at Arkansas Lane and Bowen road, but the driver fled. The officer discontinued the pursuit and a short distance later, the vehicle ran a red light at Davis Drive and Cooper Street and hit the victim, police said.

Douglas Ogwoka Onsare Osiemo, 39, was pronounced dead at the scene. Police said they believe two people fled on foot afterwards, but they did not provide detailed descriptions.

KXAS-TV(NBC5)

#### CARROLLTON

**FB man faces murder charge in apartment slaying**

A Farmers Branch man faces a murder charge after his arrest Thursday in a fatal shooting at an apartment that day in Carrollton, authorities said.

Police said they suspect that 18-year-old Samuel Loyola and Eric Martinez, 20, were in a "heated dispute" before Martinez allegedly fired the shots.

Officers arrested Martinez at an apartment in Farmers Branch on unrelated charges, and after further investigation, he was charged in the shooting death.

He later was transferred to the Dallas County jail, police said. His bail has not been set.

Hojun Choi