

Bill Hobby, Texas' lieutenant governor for 18 years, served in that office longer than any other person elected to it. When he was first sworn into office in 1973, Bill Hobby continued a family association with the Texas Senate covering three generations and spanning more than a century. His grandfather, Edwin Hobby, was a state senator from 1874 to 1879. Hobby's father, William Pettus Hobby, Sr., was the state's 24th lieutenant governor, serving from 1915 to 1917, when he became governor.

Bill Hobby was born in Houston on January 19, 1932. After attending Rice University and receiving his degree in 1953, he entered the United States Navy and served for four years in naval intelligence. Subsequently, he joined the staff of the Houston Post, at the time published by his father, and advanced through several editorial positions. As his father's health declined, Hobby assumed increased managerial responsibilities for the newspaper company and became executive editor and president of the company in 1965. He served as president of the Post for nearly 20 years, until the sale of the family-owned newspaper in 1983.

Hobby received his initial experience in state government as senate parliamentarian of the 56th Legislature under Lieutenant Governor Ben Ramsey in 1959. Later, during the presidential administration of Lyndon B. Johnson, he was named to the Presidential Task Force on Suburban Problems and to the National Citizens Advisory Committee on Vocational Rehabilitation. In 1969 Hobby was appointed to two state-level posts. As public member and chairman of the Senate Interim Committee on Welfare Reform, he headed an extensive review of the state's welfare system. He also was named to the Texas Air Control Board.

In 1971 Hobby resigned from the Texas Air Control Board to run for lieutenant governor. He was elected in 1972 and presided over the Senate of the 63rd Legislature, where, as chairman of the Legislative Budget Board, he promoted policies to improve the state's budget-making process, including zero-based budgeting and the use of fiscal notes to determine the fiscal impact of a bill before its passage. In 1972 a constitutional amendment was adopted lengthening the term of office for lieutenant governor from two to four years. Beginning in 1974, the year this change became effective, Hobby was reelected to four four-year terms.

During his tenure in office, Hobby chaired the special advisory committee known as the Hobby-Clayton Commission, which recommended the Texas Sunset Act to improve economy and efficiency in state government. He also was a member of the Select Committee on Public Education from 1983 to 1984; the committee's recommendations led to the reform of public education in Texas.

The Hobby era in Texas politics brought tremendous progress in numerous areas, including public education, mental health, water conservation, fiscal management, indigent health care, correctional programs, and public assistance programs. His many achievements point to his determination that Texas sustain its commitment to excellence in higher education and its support for the resources needed to make that possible.

Currently holder of the Sid Richardson Chair in Public Affairs at the LBJ School of Public Affairs in Austin, Hobby also is Radoslav Tsanoff Professor at Rice University. He has continued a successful journalistic and business career and now is chairman of the board of H&C Communications, Inc. Hobby also serves on the boards of Southwest Airlines and St. Edward's University and is a commissioner for the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department.