



THE SIXTH FLOOR MUSEUM
AT DEALEY PLAZA

NATIONAL HISTORY DAY 2019 TRIUMPH & TRAGEDY IN HISTORY SAMPLE PROJECT

Goals for Dallas: A City Restored after the Assassination of President Kennedy



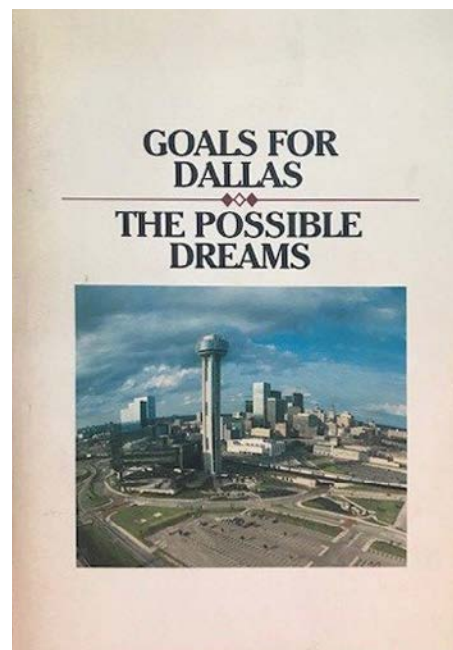
Memorial plaque in Dealey Plaza, with flowers placed all around it. December 1965.

George Reid Collection / The Sixth Floor Museum at Dealey Plaza



Dallas Mayor J. Erik Jonsson on Houston Street, adjacent to Dealey Plaza, holding a wreath of flowers. November 1966.

George Reid Collection / The Sixth Floor Museum at Dealey Plaza



Goals for Dallas: The Possible Dreams. 1982.

Reading Room Collection / The Sixth Floor Museum at Dealey Plaza

GOALS FOR DALLAS

A City Restored after the Assassination of President Kennedy

Artifacts | Oral Histories | Books | Articles | YouTube | Websites

This sample project guide collates materials from both the Museum's library and permanent collections to highlight the story of an American city's decades-long effort to overcome the tragic assassination of a president on its downtown streets. In 1964, a turbulent time for Dallas, J. Erik Jonsson took office as mayor. John F. Kennedy had been assassinated the previous year in downtown Dallas, and residents and leaders were struggling to come to terms with the event and its aftermath. Jonsson saw the need to rehabilitate the city's image and in December 1965 called together a group of diverse Dallas citizens to answer the question: "Shall we deal adequately with the future or be run over by it?" Jonsson formed a community-based initiative called *Goals for Dallas*, an ambitious list of objectives which would harness the ingenuity of Dallas citizens and transform its reputation.

Tragedy: In the aftermath of the assassination of President Kennedy in 1963, the city of Dallas was scorned, and the moniker as the "city of hate" seemed permanently stamped to its reputation. The city was engulfed in a sense of shame and became the focus of anger and resentment for creating an environment of divisive politics in which a beloved president was killed.

Triumph: Mayor Jonsson saw an opportunity to unite the city and heal its damaged psyche by implementing the citizen-driven *Goals for Dallas* project. The goals addressed issues of governance, design, health, welfare, transportation, public safety, education, cultural activities, recreation and entertainment and the economy. Within a decade, the initiative accomplished the opening of an international airport, a new city hall complex, the expansion of the library system, improvement of conditions at public school facilities and the launch of a public television station, consequently transforming Dallas to a city defined by its progress, unity and modernity instead of tragedy.

ARTIFACTS

This selection of artifacts, letters, documents, newspapers and magazines from the Museum's permanent collection highlight the right-wing conservative reputation Dallas had earned prior to the assassination and the hostile reactions it received in the wake of the assassination. Hyperlinks direct to the Museum's [online collections](#) for in-depth descriptions. For research assistance, please contact the Reading Room at readingroom@jfk.org or 214.389.3070.

Photographs

[1989.100.0005.0017](#) – President and Mrs. Kennedy greeting crowds at Love Field

[1989.100.0053.0002](#) – Memorial flower arrangements in Dealey Plaza

[1996.014.0066](#) – Dallas Mayor J. Erik Jonsson on Houston Street holding a wreath of flowers

[2014.080.0119.0002](#) – Nixon supporters outside the Baker Hotel in Dallas

[2014.080.0127.0003](#) – The Johnsons surrounded by Nixon supporters in the Baker Hotel

Artifacts

[1997.056.0114](#) – "The Shame of Dallas, Texas" from *The Saturday Evening Post*, April 11, 1964.

[1999.023.0017](#) – Wanted for Treason Flyer

[2004.058.0017](#) – Anti-Kennedy ad by the American Fact-Finding Committee

2013.056.0001 – Letter written by a young man in San Diego to his parents in Dallas about the assassination

2013.059.0001 – Letter written by a man to his son about what he saw in Dallas

2013.095.0004 – Letter written by Cynthia Parkinson Luckie, a nursing student at Parkland at the time of the assassination

Letters sent to Reverend William A. Holmes after delivering his sermon – As minister of Northaven Methodist Church in Dallas, Reverend Holmes took a stand against political extremism and incivility with a powerful and controversial sermon the Sunday after the assassination of President Kennedy. Later that week parts of his sermon were broadcast nationally. He and his family received many letters in response to his sermon, some in support and many against.

2007.016.0011 – Harriett O'Boyle commends the sermon and refers to General Edwin Walker, the John Birch Society and the attack on Adlai Stevenson as evidence of right-wing conservatism in Dallas.

2007.016.0030 – James E. Sheldon Jr. commends the sermon and the Reverend's courage for speaking out despite the possible backlash.

2007.016.0038 – Gloria Johnston Wise commends the sermon and hopes for action against extremists in Dallas.

2007.016.0245 – Mr. and Mrs. Ed Curran disapprove of the sermon and fear it will result in additional ridicule and backlash.

2007.016.0252 – Harry J. Garrett Jr. disapproves of the sermon and criticisms of Dallas.

2007.016.0255 – M.A. Moore disagrees with the sermon, stating that a pro-communist's choice of Dallas as the site for his tragic act is no reflection on the city of Dallas.

Letters to Republican Congressman Bruce Alger – Bruce Alger was an ultraconservative politician who dominated Dallas politics in the years before the Kennedy assassination. Alger was particularly critical of the Kennedy administration and passage of civil rights legislation.

2014.003.0072.0001 – Response letter from Alger to Carl B. Young stating that he shares the belief that legislation should be judged on merit and should not be passed out of sentiment for the assassination.

2014.003.0072.0002 – Carl B. Young expresses disdain for President Kennedy and granting civil rights to African-Americans.

2014.003.0121.0002 – Mrs. W. M. Grisham requests Alger to vote against civil rights legislation and federal aid to public and private schools; Mrs. Kennedy's mail postage for free initiative; \$50,000 for a staff for Mrs. Kennedy; and payment of President Kennedy's death expenses.

Newspapers (visit online newspaper sources at your local library or the Reading Room to read about the *Goals for Dallas* project)

The Dallas Morning News

Dallas Times Herald

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEWS

The audio-visual Oral History Collection offers personal insights into the history and culture of the 1960s. To listen to oral history interviews and request research assistance, contact the Reading Room at readingroom@jfk.org or 214.389.3070.

The Museum's Oral History Collection includes interviews with prominent members of the *Goals for Dallas* committees, Dallas Citizen's Council and various Dallas civic organizations. Additional firsthand accounts from Dallas citizens describe the city's atmosphere after the assassination.

Leland & Patricia Coggan

Conservative Dallasites who had moved to New York City days prior to the Kennedy assassination, the Coggans were publicly insulted in the aftermath because of their hometown. They returned to Dallas one year later. Recorded March 25, 2013.

George & Jeannette Crawford

The Crawfords were active in the civil rights and peace movements of the 1960s. They both recall Dallas as a city of hatred and anger at the time of the Kennedy assassination because of vocal right-wing extremism. Recorded June 12, 2009, and February 8, 2016.

Jack Fletcher

An Oak Cliff postal worker in 1963, Fletcher was a longtime member of the John Birch Society and an acquaintance of General Edwin Walker. Recorded September 6, 2012.

Dr. Paul Geisel

Professor emeritus at the School of Urban/Public Affairs at the University of Texas at Arlington, Geisel was a consultant to the Dallas County Historical Foundation during the planning of The Sixth Floor exhibit. In the months after the exhibit opened, he conducted a visitor reaction survey. Recorded September 5, 2008.

Dr. Bryghte D. Godbold

As vice president of the University of Texas at Dallas, Godbold was one of the sponsors of the Trade Mart luncheon on November 22, 1963. In 1964, he was appointed director of the significant *Goals for Dallas* program by Mayor J. Erik Jonsson. Recorded October 11, 2007.

Dr. Michael V. Hazel

A noted local historian and author/editor of several books, including *Historic Photos of Dallas* (2006) and *Remembering Dallas* (2010), Hazel is editor of *Legacies Dallas History Journal* and organizer of its annual conference. His late parents attended the Trade Mart luncheon on November 22, 1963, because of his father serving on the Dallas Citizens Council. Recorded April 30, 2016, and January 11, 2017.

Rev. William A. Holmes

As minister of Northaven United Methodist Church, Holmes gave a powerful and controversial sermon on Sunday, November 24, 1963, in which he mentioned that some Dallas schoolchildren cheered upon learning of President Kennedy's death. Portions of the sermon were later broadcast on CBS, bringing international attention to both Holmes and the city of Dallas. Recorded March 2, 2007, and November 20, 2008.

J. Erik Jonsson

A notable mayor in the years following the assassination (1964-71), Jonsson was a longtime community leader who is credited with helping Dallas through that traumatic period. As president of the Dallas Citizens Council in 1963, he met the presidential party at Dallas Love Field and later announced to the crowd at the Trade Mart that the President had been shot. Recorded June 30, August 17, and November 10, 1992.

Dr. Norman Kaplan

A faculty member at UT Southwestern Medical School for more than fifty years, Kaplan was at Parkland Memorial Hospital on November 22, 1963. As one of Dallas's leading voices for education reform in the 1960s, he helped organize the League for Education Advancement (LEAD) and later served on the education panel of the *Goals for Dallas* program. Recorded May 3, 2006, and January 20, 2016.

Stanley Marcus

A longtime community leader and the late chairman emeritus of Neiman Marcus department stores, Marcus was U.N. Ambassador Adlai Stevenson's host during his visit to Dallas in October 1963. As a member of the Dallas Citizens Council, Marcus openly opposed President Kennedy's trip to Dallas in November out of concern for his safety. Recorded July 11, 1995.

Virginia McAlester

McAlester is a noted Dallas author, historian, and preservation activist. She was attending Radcliffe College in Cambridge, Massachusetts, at the time of the assassination and experienced a negative and hostile reaction toward Dallas. Recorded February 7, 2018.

Dr. Darwin Payne

A reporter for the *Dallas Times Herald* in 1963, Payne was in Abraham Zapruder's office shortly after the assassination and covered the events of that weekend, visiting the Texas School Book Depository building and Oswald's rooming house in Oak Cliff. A prominent Dallas historian, Payne is now professor emeritus of communications at Southern Methodist University. Recorded January 20, 1995; November 21, 1999; October 23, 2003; April 20, 2006; July 24, 2012; January 31, 2015; and May 23, 2016.

Dr. James W. Pennebaker

Currently a professor at the University of Texas at Austin, Pennebaker was a social psychologist at Southern Methodist University in the 1980s. In that capacity, he conducted a series of studies in cooperation with the Dallas County Historical Foundation regarding the emotional impact of the assassination of President Kennedy. Some of his findings were published in his book *Opening Up: The Healing Power of Expressing Emotions* (1990). Recorded October 17, 2008.

George Schrader

Schrader was assistant city manager for Dallas from 1966 to 1972 and city manager from 1972 to 1981. He was actively involved in the *Goals for Dallas* program and numerous development projects in the years after the assassination. Recorded February 9, 1993, and January 27, 2018.

C. Judson Shook

As the award-winning director of public works for Dallas County from 1968 to 1981, Shook helped save the Texas School Book Depository building from demolition by arranging for Dallas County to purchase the structure as part of a 1977 bond election. He was then part of early efforts to establish an exhibition on the sixth floor of the building. Recorded August 13, 1992.

Lee R. Slaughter, Jr.

A longtime conservative business leader, Slaughter was an active supporter of Congressman Bruce Alger and served on the Dallas Citizens Council for twenty-five years. Slaughter saw the Kennedy motorcade on Lemmon Avenue and enjoyed a brief verbal exchange with the President. Recorded August 5, 2010.

Henry Tatum

Tatum is the son of the late C.A. Tatum Jr., former CEO of Texas Utilities and a noted Dallas civic leader. C.A. Tatum served as chairman of the board of governors at Southern Methodist University and was a longtime member of the Dallas Citizens Council. Henry Tatum joined *The Dallas Morning News* in 1967 and retired in 2004 as associate editor of the editorial page. Recorded September 15, 2006.

Bernard Weissman

A conservative activist, Weissman briefly lived in Dallas in November 1963. During that time he associated with right-wing organizations, including the John Birch Society, and ultimately co-wrote and signed his name to the black-bordered, anti-Kennedy advertisement published in *The Dallas Morning News* on November 22, 1963. Weissman later testified before the Warren Commission. Recorded April 5, 2016.

Wes Wise

Mayor of Dallas from 1971 to 1976, Wise in 1963 was a reporter for *KRLD-TV* in Dallas and president of the Dallas Press Club. He spoke with Jack Ruby in Dealey Plaza the day after the assassination. Previously, in October 1963, Wise captured on film the famous attack on U.N. Ambassador Adlai Stevenson in Dallas. From 1992 to 1997, Wise served as a consultant and primary interviewer for the Museum's Oral History Project. Recorded January 26, 1993; November 22, 1998; September 22, 2005; November 1, 2007; November 20, 2008; October 19, 2013; and January 31, 2015.

Lawrence Wright

A staff writer for *The New Yorker*, Wright is the Pulitzer Prize-winning author of *The Looming Tower: Al-Qaeda and the Road to 9/11* (2006). He was a student at Woodrow Wilson High School in Dallas at the time of the assassination and later wrote

about his experiences in the autobiographical book, *In the New World: Growing Up with America from the Sixties to the Eighties* (1987). Recorded April 30, 2016.

BOOKS

The books and articles below detail the development of the *Goals for Dallas* program. A series of books published by *Goals for Dallas* staff listed timetables and strategies for moving the city forward. Articles by local journalists and historians analyzed the impact of the civic initiative and assess its successes and failures. Visit the [Library Catalog](#) for complete list of books, magazines, and videos.

Brown, Carolyn. *Dallas: A Portrait of a City*. Massachusetts: Lightwave, 2014.

Excellence in Education Foundation. *Goals for Dallas: Achieving the Goals*. Dallas: Goals for Dallas, 1970.

Fagin, Stephen. *Assassination and Commemoration*. Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 2013.

Goals for Dallas. *New Goals for Dallas 1977*. Dallas: Goals for Dallas, 1977.

Goals for Dallas. *Achieving the Goals for Dallas 1978-1983*. Dallas: Goals for Dallas, 1979.

Goals for Dallas. *Goals for Dallas: The Possible Dreams*. Dallas: Goals for Dallas, 1982.

Graduate Research Center of the Southwest. *Goals for Dallas*. Dallas: Goals for Dallas, 1966.

Hanson, Royce. *Civic Culture and Urban Change: Governing Dallas*. Detroit, MI: Wayne State University, 2003.

Leslie, Warren. *Dallas: Public and Private*. Dallas: Southern Methodist University, 1964.

Minutaglio, Bill and Steven L. Davis. *Dallas 1963*. New York: Twelve, 2013.

Payne, Darwin. *No Small Dreams: J. Erik Jonsson, Texas Visionary*. Dallas: DeGolyer Library, Southern Methodist University, 2014.

Pennebaker, James W. *Opening Up: The Healing Power of Expressing Emotions*. New York: The Guilford Press, 1990.

Southwest Center for Advanced Studies. *Goals for Dallas*. Dallas: Goals for Dallas, 1967.

Southwest Center for Advanced Studies. *Goals for Dallas: Summaries of the Proposals for Achieving the Goals for Dallas*. Dallas: Goals for Dallas, 1969.

ARTICLES

Brown, Greg. "Forever Changed: Architecture of Dallas: Reframed by the Kennedy Assassination." *Columns*, vol. 30, no. 12, Winter 2013

Curtis, Gregory. "Behind the Lines." *Texas Monthly*, vol. 10, no. 8, Aug. 1982.

Fairbanks, Robert B. "The Assassination and Dallas Politics: Changes to Continuity." *Legacies*, vol. 10, no. 2, Fall 1998.

Payne, Darwin. "J. Erik Jonsson: Center Stage at a National Tragedy." *Legacies*, vol. 18, no. 2, Fall 2006.

Tuck, Richard. "J. Erik Jonsson: The Practical Dreamer." *Legacies*, vol. 15, no. 2, Fall 2003.

Wright, Lawrence. "Why Do They Hate Us So Much?" *Texas Monthly*, Nov. 1983.

YOUTUBE

The selections below offer an in-depth examination of Dallas' reputation as the "city of hate" and explores how *Goals for Dallas* altered that perception.

Assassination and Commemoration: The Sixth Floor Museum at 25 – The Sixth Floor Museum at Dealey Plaza
In commemoration of the Museum's 25th anniversary, Museum Curator Stephen Fagin shared a post-assassination history of the Texas School Book Depository building and discussed the development of The Sixth Floor Museum exhibit, which opened on February 20, 1989.

An Evening with Rev. William A. Holmes – The Sixth Floor Museum at Dealey Plaza
This lecture and discussion featured Reverend William A. Holmes. As minister of Northaven Methodist Church in Dallas, the Reverend Holmes gave a powerful and controversial sermon on Sunday, November 24, 1963, in which he mentioned that some Dallas schoolchildren cheered upon learning of President Kennedy's death. Portions of the sermon were later broadcast on CBS, bringing international attention to both Holmes and the city of Dallas.

The City of Hate: A Conversation with Quin Mathews and Bill Minutaglio – The Sixth Floor Museum at Dealey Plaza
Following a screening of his 2013 documentary film "City of Hate: Dallas and the Assassination," longtime Dallas resident, journalist and filmmaker Quin Mathews participated in an informal discussion with University of Texas clinical professor of journalism Bill Minutaglio. Formerly a senior writer and columnist with *The Dallas Morning News* and *San Antonio Express News*, Minutaglio co-authored "Dallas 1963" along with Steven L. Davis.

Goals for Dallas: The Impact of Ethical Leadership – Southern Methodist University: Cary M. Maguire Center for Ethics & Public Responsibility
SMU Communications Professor Rita Kirk, director of the Maguire Center for Ethics and Public Responsibility, and Walter Humann, a civic leader and founder of the Dallas Area Rapid Transit system, talk about *Goals for Dallas*, established 50 years ago under the leadership of Mayor J. Erik Jonsson.

To Shape a City – *Goals for Dallas*
A public relations film sponsored by *Goals for Dallas* in which Mayor Erik Jonsson explains his vision for a new direction for the city that was branded the "city of hate."

WEBSITES

These websites provide access to an array of primary and secondary sources in a variety of formats, many of which are accessible online.

Dallas Public Library, Texas/Dallas History and Archives Division – *Goals for Dallas* Oral History Project
"Goals for Dallas Oral History Project" consists of eleven oral history interviews with prominent civil leaders and *Goals for Dallas* staff discussing their experience and involvement with the project.

Harvard Kennedy School – *Goals for Dallas* case study
This series of cases focuses on the *Goals for Dallas* program. Part A focuses on Erik Jonsson and the critical problems confronting him as he took office as mayor of Dallas in 1964. Part B provides background notes on three subjects related to the problems Jonsson faced and his solutions to them: Dallas, Texas Instruments, and the American Assembly (an organization established by President Eisenhower, and a model for Jonsson's program). Part C describes the outcome of *Goals for Dallas*. It sketches the program's rationale, objectives and process, and presents participants' views on the program's impact.

Institute for Urban Policy Research at the University of Texas at Dallas – *Goals for Dallas* progress reports

After the launch of the *Goals for Dallas* program in 1966, the *Goals for Dallas* team released four progress reports between 1966 and 1969 that provided information about work on the project to date. The details in these reports shed light on the way that *Goals for Dallas* took shape, and show to some extent the involvement of thousands of citizens in the process. Each report can be downloaded in its entirety.

University of Texas at Dallas – *Goals for Dallas* Papers

This collection contains correspondence, planning committee list, memoranda, agendas, meeting minutes, reports, financial statements, notes and news releases associated with *Goals for Dallas* between 1965 – 1970.