

CENTENNIAL RESOLUTION
ELEVENTH COURT OF APPEALS
EASTLAND, TEXAS

One hundred years ago this week, the Eleventh Court of Appeals in Eastland, Texas came into existence. In 1925 during the 39th Texas legislative session, Senator Carl C. Hardin of Erath County filed a bill to establish the Eleventh Court of Appeals in Eastland. With the financial and political support of the citizens of Eastland County to host an appellate court, the bill passed. Governor Miriam “Ma” Ferguson signed the bill into law. Her execution of the bill was significant because her predecessor, Governor Pat Neff, vetoed a similar measure in 1923.

The court was originally housed on the fourth floor of the First State Bank in Eastland (the current home of the Eastland County Museum). The court soon moved to its current quarters in the Eastland County Courthouse when the “new” courthouse was built with space designed for the court.

Over time, the court expanded, both in subject-matter jurisdiction and geography. The court originally only had civil jurisdiction, and it was known as the Eleventh Court of Civil Appeals for the first fifty-six years of its existence. As a result of a constitutional amendment in 1980, all intermediate courts of appeals in Texas acquired criminal jurisdiction on September 1, 1981.

The original counties that comprised the court’s jurisdiction included Stonewall, Haskell, Throckmorton, Stephens, Shackelford, Jones, Mitchell, Nolan, Taylor, Callahan, Eastland, Dawson, Howard, Scurry, Fisher, Comanche, Erath, Palo Pinto and Borden. In 1927, Knox and Baylor Counties were added to the court’s jurisdiction while Borden, Dawson, and Howard Counties were removed. In 1929, Borden, Dawson, and Howard Counties were re-added to the court’s jurisdiction. In 1941, Brown and Coleman Counties were added. Then, in 2003, the counties of Ector, Gaines, Glasscock, Martin, and Midland were added to the jurisdiction of the Eleventh Court of Appeals. This 2003 addition of counties was a significant event because it greatly increased the population of the court’s appellate district and its caseload.

The first three justices appointed to the court by Governor Ferguson were Chief Justice Will Pannill of Stephenville, Justice John Littler of Big Spring, and Justice T.B. Ridgell of Breckenridge. District Court Judge George L. Davenport

administered the oath of office to Chief Justice Pannill and Justice Littler on May 1, 1925; Justice Ridgell took his oath a few days later. Thus, this court came into existence on May 1, 1925, when Chief Justice Pannill and Justice Littler took their oaths of office. The first opinions from the new court were issued on May 17, 1925.

Twenty-five justices have served on the Eleventh Court of Appeals during its one-hundred-year history. One hundred twenty-five attorneys have served the court as briefing attorneys and staff attorneys. Six clerks of the court and numerous other dedicated employees have served the court, many with careers spanning twenty, thirty, and forty years. In honor of their collective years of service and dedication to the people of the State of Texas and the Eleventh Court of Appeals, the court's proceedings for this week that includes Thursday, May 1, 2025, are conducted in their honor and a copy of this centennial resolution will be filed in the Court's minutes for this week.

Dated: April 30, 2025

/s/ John M. Bailey

John M. Bailey

Chief Justice - 11th Court of Appeals

/s/ W. Stacy Trotter

W. Stacy Trotter

Justice - 11th Court of Appeals

/s/ W. Bruce Williams

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Justice - 11th Court of Appeals

Attest:

/s/ Marla Hanks

Marla Hanks – Clerk of the Court