

Texas education:

State looks to Garlandites for leadership roles

His Garland High School senior classmates who voted him “Most Likely to Succeed” back in 1995 don’t have to ask “Whatever happened to Mike Morath?”

He’s been in the news almost since the day he graduated with an International Baccalaureate diploma and took off for George Washington University in Washington, D.C. to score a BBA degree in Finance in just two-and-a-half years. Summa cum laude.

He came back home, got married, settled in East Dallas and started a highly successful tech company, Minute Menu Systems, sold it for an impressive sum, won two terms as a driving and somewhat controversial member of the Dallas ISD Board until that service was interrupted when Gov. Greg Abbott appointed him to head the Texas Education Agency. He was sworn in Jan. 16.

Looks as though young Mike Morath (he’s 38), an active participant in civic affairs and avid mountain climber, hasn’t used up his time in the spotlight just yet.

It’s not the first time state leaders have picked Garland leaders to fashion changes in Texas secondary education.

In 1929, when the Texas Legislature created the State Board of Education, Gov. Dan Moody chose as one of its nine members John W. O’Banion, who would later become a Garland civic leader. O’Banion is memorialized in the name of a Garland middle school and on O’Banion Road, which runs beside 205 acres that once was his estate.

(Please see MOSES, Page 2)



Mike Morath

In historic Turin, Italy, a touch of Garland



Kim Williams

Kim Williams has secure roots in Garland, though she grew up in Houston. For the last several years she has lived and operated out of Turin, Italy, where, after getting a degree in architectural studies from the University of Texas, she studied historical decorated Italian pavements — the subject of her 1997 book, *Italian Pavements: Patterns in Space*.

Since mathematics was involved in the design of those pavements, she developed an intense interest in the mathematics of architecture, which led her in 1996 to establish the now firmly successful international conference series: “Nexus: Architecture and Mathematics.”

Which led her to found, in 1999, the *Nexus Network Journal* dedicated to scholarly research on architecture and math.

Which led her, in 2000, to establish Kim Williams Books, an independent press devoted to those subjects.

Which led her, in March, to fulfill a longtime wish — publishing a book written by her father about his — and her — Garland heritage. In the 1990s, her dad, William Joseph “Billy” Williams, who died in 2013, wrote his memoir of early life in Garland. He had been successful in the insurance business in Garland, but moved with his family to Houston in 1957 to join a large firm, and later founded his own benefits consulting business.

(Please see HER, Page 2)

Moses directed education agency in 1990s

(Continued from Page 1)

He served ten years as director of supervision and chief high school supervisor until his resignation in 1949 to return to Garland.

In 1995, the same year Mike Morath graduated from Garland High School, Gov. George W. Bush appointed another former Garland student and school administrator, Mike Moses, as Texas Commissioner of Education. Moses served for the next four years as overseer of 1,046 school districts, 6,343 campuses, 435,000 employees, and 3.6 million schoolchildren.

Mike Moses' father was Morgan Moses, Garland High School principal from 1956 to 1963. The younger Moses's first job in education was assistant principal of Brandenburg Middle School in Garland.

He later served in education posts through the state, and, after his term as Texas education commissioner, he was most notably general superintendent of the continually troubled Dallas ISD, 2001 to 2004. The Dallas job came after his service as deputy chancellor of the Texas Tech University System (1999-2000).

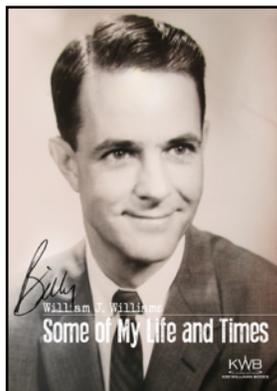
He currently serves as a visiting professor in the University of North Texas College of Education's Department of Teacher Education and Administration and is the senior educational advisor for Raise Your Hand Texas and the Center for Reform of School Systems.

O'Banion, a former teacher, was known in Garland as "Judge" and "Doctor," referring to his service as a justice of the peace in the 1950s, and in recognition of an 1938 honorary doctorate bestowed on him by Texas Christian University. In 1941, he served as president of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. Just a few days before his death on Dec. 1, 1962, the Association honored him with a resolution saluting his "leadership in secondary education in the South."

O'Banion Middle School, named for the educator, is on Birchwood Drive on land that once was a part of the O'Banion estate. Much of that former O'Banion acreage is between Northwest Highway, Centerville Road, O'Banion Road and La Prada Dr. The Duck Creek Greenbelt also occupies a part of the former O'Banion property.

Her great-grandmother was Garland's first female postmistress

(Continued from Page 1)



Kim's great-grandmother was Nora Seawright Lemmon, the first woman postmistress of Garland. Her grandmother, Hattie, married George Williams in 1909 and they lived out their lives in Garland. The book is richly illustrated by Kim's own family photos, including the George Williams home that was damaged in a disastrous 1927 tornado.

She has offered some of those family photos to the Landmark Society for preservation in the museum's collection. And a copy of the book, *Billy: Some of My Life and Times*, has been presented to the Landmark museum.

A nickel a bar

When the ‘Candy Man’ came to town

“Roscoe Brand the Candy Man” distributed offerings from Curtiss Candy Co., producer of the popular Baby Ruth and Butterfinger bars. Otto Schnering founded the Chicago-based firm in 1916, but German-sounding names lacked domestic appeal during WWI, so he had styled the company Curtiss, his mother’s maiden name.

From the family home on Ann St. at Walnut, Brand piloted his candy truck through Garland and neighboring towns in eastern Dallas County, calling on small grocers, theaters, gasoline stations and school cafeterias. He often deputized his teenage daughter, Virginia Ann, to make bicycle deliveries to Garland Elementary School.

By Spring 1942, war with Japan had cut sugar imports from the Philippines and diverted cargo ships from Hawaii for military purposes. With domestic supplies severely reduced, sugar became the first

American food subject to wartime rationing. To prevent hoarding and price-gouging, the Office of Price Administration issued Ration Book One, often called “The Sugar Book,” which contained stamps for individual purchases of sugar.

No sugar could be legally acquired by individuals without the stamps, which eventually applied also to items such as butter, clothing, coffee, gasoline, meat, shoes and more. Some candy manufacturing continued, and American soldiers’ rations included special Hershey bars, often formulated to resist melting.

Both Baby Ruth and Butterfingers were manufactured with corn sugar, or dextrose, directly metabolized by the body into energy.

America’s sugar rationing ended in ’47, and the original Curtiss bars are now produced by Nestle, but cost more than they did from Roscoe Brand.

— Michael Hayslip



Garland Landmark Society
Virginia Ann Brand (Stone) in 1943, with two prospects for nickel candy bars from her dad’s truck in the Brand driveway at Ann and Walnut Streets. The boys’ parents worked on the farm of Dr. B.H. Freeman, across Walnut, now the site of Freeman Elementary School.

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