#26: Our Great Small-Town Doctor – Mayor Haden McKay

Humble had a very unique gentleman looking out for the welfare of both the town and its citizens for many years: Dr. Haden Edwards McKay, Jr. Both his father and his grandfather were physicians. In fact, Dr. McKay, Jr. was actually Dr. Haden Edwards McKay III. It was the Humble townfolk that called him Jr. They referred to his father (a doctor in early Humble) as Sr., and the younger Dr. McKay as Jr. At the time, they probably didn't realize Sr. and Jr. were actually Dr. McKay II and Dr. McKay III.

Haden McKay III was the son of Dr. Haden McKay II and Zinka Aden. He was born in Bardstown, Kentucky where his father was a physician. When he was eleven years old, young Haden moved to Humble with his family in December 1919. The young Haden attended the schools in Humble, graduating from the old Humble High School in May 1922. He next attended Mississippi State University where he earned a Bachelor of Science Degree in 1930. He earned his Doctor of Medicine degree from the Chicago Medical College in 1937.

In 1938, the new Dr. McKay (Jr.) opened the McKay Clinic on Avenue C in Humble with his father (Dr. McKay, Sr.). The young bachelor lived in an apartment at the back of the clinic. It didn't take long for him to enter politics. He was elected as an Alderman on the Humble City Council in April 1939. Humble's most eligible bachelor (doctor and politician) fell in love with a young nurse at St. Joseph's Hospital, Lillian Janda. They married in January 1941, and the newlyweds made their home in Humble. He was re-elected to the Humble City Council in April 1941 but left for active service in the World War II.

He attained the rank of Major through service in the medical corps of the United States Army. After his discharge from the Army in 1946, he returned to his medical practice in Humble. He was re-elected as an Alderman for Humble in 1962, but also became a leader in many medical groups, including as President of the Harris County Academy of General Practice, Vice-President of the Harris County Medical Society, and as President of the Texas Academy of General Practitioners. From this point forward, he became popular for his dual roles as a dedicated physician, and savvy local politician.

He served 14 years on the Humble City Council before being elected as Mayor of Humble in 1971. In 1973, he was the recipient of the Humble Area Chamber of Commerce Citizen of the Year Award; an award that would later be named after him. Being Mayor didn't slow down his medical work, and his medical expertise was recognized across the State. He served on the medical staff at Memorial Baptist Hospital, St. Joseph's Hospital in Houston, and was the charter Chief of Staff of the Northeast Medical Center Hospital when it opened in 1977. He also served as a Deputy Medical Examiner for Harris County. During all this time, he continued to run his little clinic on Avenue C.

He was a very popular individual and was continuously being re-elected as Mayor. His office at the McKay clinic includes pictures of McKay posing with most major figures in Texas politics, as well as a few celebrities. He was also known the small-town Mayor that carried a .38 in his right boot. For the people in his town, he always had time to talk and visit. He continued to volunteer for good cause, and served as President of the Humble Rotary, as Director of the Humble Chamber of Commerce, and as a member of the Masonic Lodge. He ended up serving as the Mayor of Humble for 24 years before stepping down in 1995. He continued to see patients at his clinic until the day he died in 1996.

Today, we still celebrate the great Dr. Haden McKay, Jr., and you can easily be reminded of him by driving past his clinic on Avenue C or by driving on McKay Drive behind the Northeast Medical Center. And each year, the Chamber of Commerce bestows the Haden McKay Citizen of the Year Award to an outstanding local citizen in his honor.

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