

## THANKS FOR THE MEMORIES

The Hotel Galvez and Spa lives eternally in the memories of thousands of people who have been its guests over a century. The following are a few of the mementoes they have shared with us.

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1915

*Lawrence A. Wainer*  
*Dallas, Texas*

My father, Max Wainer Sr., was born in the Hotel Galvez, in Room 231, during the 1915 storm. (Room 231 was located where the elevator bank now stands.) I have a copy of his birth certificate and a letter from the general manager of the Hotel Galvez, written in 1915, congratulating the parents on the new arrival and assuring them that the Hotel Galvez would take care of them.

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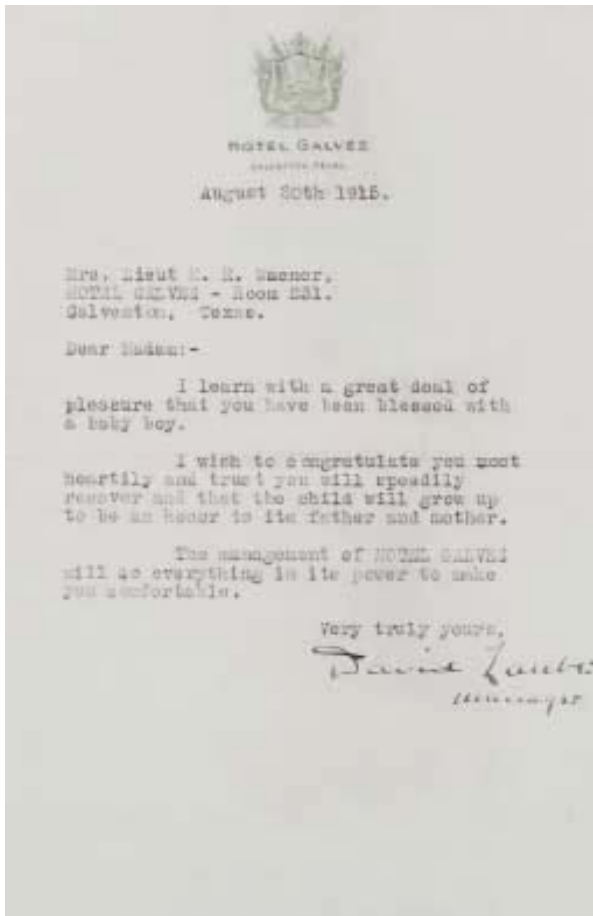
1926

*Dr. E. Sinks McLarty*  
*Galveston, Texas*

We moved to the Galvez in 1926, when I was about five. The hotel back then had a lot of permanent residents. Times were hard and a lot of people worked for the hotel and lived there, too. Pop was the hotel doctor. Even though my dad was the doctor, we were too poor to eat at the hotel. We got our meals at a boarding house a few blocks away. You learn to eat fast at a boarding house.

We lived in three rooms in the middle section of the sixth floor, on the south side, overlooking the Gulf. Sam Maceo had his penthouse on the floor just above us. Sam was a good man, really nice to me. He had a nephew about my age who stayed at the Galvez sometimes. His nephew had a secret hiding place inside one of the closets where you could look into people's bedrooms, but I was always afraid to go with him. They said that Sam was a gangster. I don't know about that. Someone had to keep the town clean and orderly, otherwise people wouldn't come here to gamble. The thing is, everyone had a good job and everyone seemed happy.

All the permanent guests had a little space up in the attic to store things. I'd go up there to play or shoot pigeons with my BB gun. I walked over every inch of the roof and knew all the hiding places in the basement. That's where I kept my bike, in the basement. I'd make these balsam-wood airplanes and fly them in the big ballroom when no one was in there. Or I'd go up to the roof and watch them fly airplanes over at Fort Crockett on Forty-fifth Street. A lot of times people who lived at the hotel



Opposite: A number of Galvez postcards were popular over the years with guests writing home. Above: David Lauber, the Galvez's manager, wrote to congratulate the parents of Max Wainer, who was born in the hotel during the 1915 hurricane.

would be away somewhere and I'd have the whole lobby to myself. I'd take naps on the couches. Everyone in the hotel was my babysitter.

The elevator was open back then, just a metal cage. The stairwell was open, too. Walking down the stairs, you'd see this picture of some important person on the landing; I thought it must be the mayor. There were slot machines, too, lined up by the newsstand where they sold magazines, cigars, and punch boards. I remember the gal who ran the newsstand: she must have had a sugar daddy because she owned a streamlined automobile that could go 101 miles per hour. And you'd see these Third Air Force hotshots in their spats, parading around like they owned the world.

Most of the rooms on the sixth floor didn't have bathrooms. There was this one bathroom down the hall from us, behind the elevator, that nobody ever used. I ordered this alligator from a catalogue and kept him in the bathtub. Well, he got out one day and created quite a ruckus. I could hear my dad shouting, "What's going on down there?" and I'd tell him, "Oh, nothing." I must have been a pain to other people. I know I was a problem because after grade school they sent me off to a military academy in Gainesville, Florida. Best thing that ever happened to me, by the way: they let me know there were rules that had to be followed.

After the Army Air Force [during World War II], I came back to the Galvez to practice with my dad. Our office was on the lower level, just below the Music Hall. We had a general practice, a lot of surgeries, and were open to the public, not just hotel guests. At first there was a separate entrance and a separate waiting room for black people, but we changed that. Color didn't matter. They were all sick, so we put them in the same waiting room and they got along great.

About 1960 we ended our practice at the Galvez and opened our own clinic.



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1927

*Priscilla Ervin*  
*Arlington, Texas*

My grandparents from Fort Worth, Roy Robert Brown and Minnie Warren Pemberton Brown, spent their 1927 honeymoon at the Hotel Galvez. All through my childhood, I heard about how lovely the hotel was. In 1933 they returned to Galveston to live for several years. On their fiftieth wedding anniversary, they returned for a stay at the hotel, a very memorable trip for them, indeed!



1928  
*Idaleene Scheu Fuqua*  
*Denton, Texas*

It was July 1928 when my father, Fred H. Scheu, a Santa Fe station agent in Wayne, Oklahoma, took his family on a vacation to Galveston. Mother ordered our bathing suits from the Montgomery Ward catalogue . . . red for my brother and me so we could be seen on the beach and black for herself and Daddy. All the suits were made of wool, so we could stay warm in the water. I had a red rubber bathing cap with little white bunnies running around it, and mother had a blue one with a white wing on it.

Grandmother Ender, whom we picked up in Waco, had never had a bathing suit in her life; she rented one from a bathhouse at the beach. Grandmother joined a senior group one day and they picked up shells on the beach.

We stayed at the Galvez, the first hotel I ever stayed at, but it would not be the last, as I spent fifty-five years in the commercial air and travel business.



Opposite top: Dr. E. Sinks McLarty was a resident of the hotel from the age of five until he was a teenager and later practiced medicine here with his father. Bottom: Roy Robert Brown and Minnie Pemberton Brown spent their honeymoon in 1927 at the Galvez. Top: Idaleene Scheu Fuqua, pictured with the straw hat on the far right, was four years old when she and her family vacationed here in 1928. For the trip, her mother ordered wool bathing suits from Montgomery Ward for the whole family. Above: A vintage matchbook features a colorful Hotel Galvez on its cover.

1930  
*Noel Newton Templer*  
*Dallas, Texas*

My aunt and uncle, Mary Jane Newton (my father's sister) and Eugene McDaniel of Hubbard, Texas, were married in Dawson, Texas, home of the bride's parents, on June 30, 1930. The McDaniels spent the first night of their honeymoon at the Galvez and then sailed from there to Cuba. As I remember, Uncle Gene and his family had always stayed at the Galvez in the summers. Numerous friends of theirs would join them each summer for their annual trek to the Galvez and the beach in the 1930s and 1940s.

From the late Forties through the Fifties, we would spend each July at the Galvez for a week with all the women in the family. We never stayed anywhere else. We would get up anywhere from 2:00 to 4:00 A.M., before it got too warm, load everything in the Roadmaster or Fleetwood, and drive the distance on a two-lane highway, through downtown Houston, and would arrive at the Galvez by late afternoon. The bellmen were so nice and always remembered us. We always had a room facing the water.

I remember the large rooms with the ceiling fans and open windows, because there was no air conditioning. I think we went down the hall to the baths. Large attic fans in the halls provided more than adequate

ventilation. When all the women went, we got adjoining rooms. When I went with my aunt and uncle, they put a cot in their room for me.

We would always have breakfast at the hotel before going to the beach. We would then walk across the street, sun until about 11:30, and have lunch at the Dream Cafe, watching the gulls swarm.

Sometimes we would drive to Gaido's or John's for lunch or dinner or perhaps just walk back across to the Balinese Room at night. I remember putting on my little white gloves and dressing to the hilt for dinner at the Balinese. It was so exciting. We always had reservations waiting for us at the Balinese, because my uncle knew the Fertittas and the Maceos personally and spent quite a bit of time with them over at the Balinese before they shut down the gambling. He told many interesting stories about that era and all the people and good times.

Each July I still feel the call of Galveston, but I know it would not be the same. Each time I go back to the Galvez lobby, I feel all of my family looking down, smiling and happy, and I fondly reflect on the memories of when we were all able to enjoy such special times.

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1944

James R. "Bob" and Virginia M. Humphreys  
Fairview, Texas

In 1944, after receiving my wings as an army pilot in Texas, my fiancée and I drove all night back to Tulsa and held our big wedding in the Presbyterian Church on June 30. My orders gave me a nine-day delay en route to my first base at Del Rio, Texas, so we scheduled our honeymoon in Galveston. We arrived at the Hotel Galvez on July 1.

At that time in front of the Hotel Galvez there was a long wharf that extended from the seawall out into the Gulf. Being young newlyweds, we decided the first night to celebrate at the wharf restaurant and maybe even gamble a little. We were dressed up in our summer holiday clothes and knocked on the entrance, ready for a good dinner and entertainment. We were turned away with the words, "You kids cannot come in here!"

With that, we went back to our room, changed clothes into my uniform and a beautiful dress for my wife, and knocked on the entrance door again. The same man said, "Good evening, sir and madam. Please come in and enjoy your stay."

Obviously, the World War II uniform with silver wings and the silver eagle on my hat, plus my beautifully dressed young bride, did the trick—because then we were only twenty-one and nineteen!





Opposite top: Galvestonians Sophie and Joe Hurley enjoy the beach near the Balinese Room, which is pictured in the background. Bottom: An old room key is one of the mementoes left from the hotel's early years. Above: James R. Humphreys and his wife, Virginia, enjoyed a 1944 honeymoon at the Hotel Galvez after he received his wings as an army pilot.

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1945

*Jeanette Leonetti*

*Houston, Texas*

In 1945 my parents, Ralph and Shirley Leonetti, spent their honeymoon at the Hotel Galvez. As they walked to the front desk they tried to pretend they weren't nervous or shy to check into a hotel for about the first time in their lives. The desk clerk requested the name for the reservation and invited my father to sign the register. Dad asked my mother if she would like to do it. This would be the first time she would be writing her new married name. Mom said that, as she was trying to be so poised and calm, she took the pen in her hand and as she bent her head down to sign rice spilled all over the desk counter from her wide-brimmed hat!

Well, so much for being coy!!

Happy 100th birthday, Hotel Galvez.

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1948

*James F. Anderson*

*Lancaster, Texas*

My memory of the Hotel Galvez in November 1948 is neither romantic nor exciting. As a matter of fact, my stay at the hotel was boring. Here's why:

After serving in World War II, I graduated from Southern Methodist University in Dallas and was hired by the U.S. Treasury Department as an internal revenue agent. The department scheduled a six-week course in income tax regulations at the Hotel Galvez. So I endured six five-day weeks in one of the hotel's conference rooms, studying tax laws.

I shared a room with another agent for one week. Our travel allowance was very meager, so we spent the rest of our time in Galveston at the Seawall Hotel down the beach. I am fortunate, at the age of eighty-five, to still have an active mind and remember the days at the Hotel Galvez.

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1961

Gayle Wilkinson

Midlothian, Texas

When I graduated from high school in 1961, my parents and the parents of three of my friends allowed us to take a graduation trip by ourselves. We each had \$50 cash. The mother of one of my friends let us use her second car and provided us with a fuel card that we used to buy gas. We paid her back later with money from our jobs when we returned.

My mother made us reservations at the Hotel Galvez. We could stay until our money ran out. I do not remember what the rate per night for the room was. But there were four of us, and there was one bed. When we arrived we put the amount of money that five days would cost in the hotel safe. We were determined to stay in Galveston for five days. What was left over was our spending money.

We ate one meal a day . . . sometimes breakfast (which was cheap) and the rest of the time at the Jack Tar Hotel cafeteria. One night we ate at Gaido's. When we ate at the Jack Tar, we would have one item . . . usually a baked potato for me, which I think cost ten cents.

We took turns sleeping three on the bed and one on the couch that was in the room.

We spent most of our days on the beach. At night we rode the elevator up and down at the hotel, or just sat in the lobby. There was a post-masters convention going on, so we had the opportunity to chat with the attendees. One night some of the gentlemen invited us to come up to the penthouse. We rode up the elevator, got off at the penthouse, walked around it once, and got right back on the elevator and came back downstairs. We were horrified at how stupid we were to assume that it was okay to go up there where there was nothing but a room full of "old men"!

That was the most daring thing we did on our trip.

I had never stayed in a hotel before, so this was an adventure that for me felt like being Alice in Wonderland there at the grand Hotel Galvez.

After five nights we checked out, using the money we had left in the safe. We had no money to buy food for the trip back to Fort Worth, but we didn't care. It had been a wonderful week, filled with memories that are with me still. It's proof that in 1961, one could spend five days at a vacation resort with just \$50.



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1961

Leo G. Stanich

Galveston, Texas

My father and mother were BOIs (born on the Island) and members of the Galvez Club many years ago. My father passed away in 1952, so that gives you an idea of how long my family has been associated with the Galvez. I still remember our club membership number: 1594.

I remember when I was a youngster at the pool ordering a hamburger and a Coke and thinking how grown up I felt giving them our club number and signing for it. My sister, Diane, and I practically grew up at the Galvez pool. A young lifeguard named Ed Hinkle taught me to swim there. Diane can't remember the name of the gentleman who taught her to swim, but she remembers the teen room downstairs, which was a gathering place for young people. It had ping-pong tables and a juke box. She had her seventh birthday party at the Galvez.

One of my most vivid memories was staying there during Hurricane Carla in 1961. My mother felt that the hotel was a good, solid, safe place to stay during the storm. When we checked in there were was a gigantic bowl of fresh fruit on a table in the lobby. This was quite an adventure for a nine-year-old, and until the storm hit with full force I roamed the hotel freely.

In the eastern part of the hotel, what was called the Villa [the motel], there was a huge picture window and that's where people gathered to watch the Gulf waters churn and rise. What a sight to watch the huge waves come crashing over the seawall. As conditions worsened, this area was closed and we went back to our rooms; my mother, sister, and grandmother and I had adjoining rooms. During the height of the storm, we heard a loud crash, which we found out later was a tornado hitting the corner of the hotel where our room was. Before, after, and during the storm, everything was done to make sure the guests were as comfortable as possible.

Over the years there have been many more memories: my sister's elegant wedding reception in the Grecian Room in 1969, for example. I know there will be many more.



Opposite top: Gayle Tucker Wilkinson and her friends celebrated their high school graduation at the Hotel Galvez in 1961. Wilkinson sneaked into a Gulf-view room to take this photograph. Center: Diane Turner, Maurine Gale, and Pam Parker posed in front of the hotel. Bottom: The beach beauties include Diane Turner, Maurine Gale, and Gayle Tucker Wilkinson. Above: During Hurricane Carla, which struck Galveston in 1961, hotel guests were made to feel "as comfortable as possible" before, during, and after the storm. Elsewhere on the Island, people were not so lucky.

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1961

Jan Johnson

League City, Texas

The wind was already gusting when my grandparents, my parents, and I checked into the Hotel Galvez mid-afternoon the Saturday before Hurricane Carla in 1961. (I was eight years old, but my memories are still vivid.) We got the last two rooms. My parents and I had one with a Gulf view on the third or fourth floor, and they put the two twin beds together for the three of us. Mom immediately started filling the bathtub with fresh water to drink and flush the toilet.

After these preparations, we went down to the lobby, which was filled with refugees who could not get rooms. Some of them were my classmates and had brought their pets, which we had been told were strictly forbidden. Our Siamese cats stayed home, but KHOU's Gene Broadrick had smuggled his in. He hosted a weekly Sunday-morning show on Galveston; its theme music was Dvořák's *New World Symphony*. Another broadcaster from Channel 11, Dan Rather, was also at the Galvez, and Mr. Broadrick introduced him to us in the lobby.

Hotel staff emptied the pool to use for the same purpose as our bathtub water. Because the hotel was more than full, every meal was served military style in the enclosed dining room from a buffet line. Not knowing what awaited us, everyone seemed to adopt a "we're-all-in-this-together" attitude to ride out the storm together. The rest of that Saturday and Sunday passed in a waiting-and-watching mode, mostly in our hotel room in front of the small television. For the first time, a radar screen was broadcast on TV, and we watched as the eye of the storm moved closer and closer to the Island, aiming to make a direct hit.

Sunday night (or maybe Monday night, or both), my parents entertained all their theater buddies in our room with poker and much liquor—my first hurricane party. Unfortunately, I fell asleep early to its background noise. Mom said that it went on until 1:00 or 2:00 A.M. Sometime after that, she awoke and looked out the window to see Ranger's Run at the Balinese Room fall into the Gulf before passing out again. At some point, she also noted the waves crashing over the seawall onto the wide lawn of the Hotel Galvez. On Monday morning, when we went down to breakfast, we heard a terrific crash from the lobby's west side: one of the floor-to-ceiling glass windows



in the Grecian (now Music) Room had crashed in. The room was immediately sealed off from all guests.

Back up in the room, we watched TV as Hurricane Carla made a definite jog to the west of Galveston Island. Even as the electricity cut off, a general sigh of relief was heard, but the storm wasn't over yet. That night, while we were sleeping, a waterspout came ashore just two blocks west of us. The tornado literally bounced down Twenty-third Street before veering over to Twenty-first, where it destroyed the original Rosenberg Elementary School, built during the 1880s.

Tuesday dawned still cloudy but much more calm. I was growing bored by now and ready to go home, but we were told that city workers had to check things out before they would give the "all clear." I remember sitting on my father's lap in the second-floor Villa on the east side of the Galvez, overlooking the seawall. The street was covered to its curb with Gulf water and I could see fish and jellyfish swimming beneath its surface. After the electricity and phone service were restored, Dad called our neighbors to see how our rented house fared. With their worst fears uppermost in their minds, my parents waited. An excited voice on the other end reported, "Oh, no! Your TV antenna is down!"

And that was the worst for us. We went home that night.

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2001

*Kathryn Straach*

*Dallas, Texas*

Where were you September 11?

I was with an old friend I have known since childhood. She gave me shelter as I watched the terrifying and heartbreaking events unfold in New York, Washington, and Pennsylvania.

My friend is the Hotel Galvez in Galveston.

My parents introduced her to me when I was young. I clearly remember toting buckets of sand from the beach across the street and dumping them into the bathtub of our suite. (I was fascinated by the sea creatures that burrow into the sand.) I sure hope my parents tipped the maid well.

I returned with my parents as a teenager and spent a memorable afternoon at the pool, flirting with a boy I ended up corresponding with for quite a while after that trip. At that time, the pool was the more traditional rectangular shape and was in front of the hotel. Now off to the hotel's side, the pool is lagoon shaped, with a swim-up bar—a setting worthy of other teenage romances.



Opposite: Howard Decker worked as an engineer to air condition the Hotel Galvez in the 1950s. A family photograph captures the Decker family enjoying the beach across from the hotel. Left: The Deckers would stay in the Galvez Villa, located on the hotel's east side, during their extended visits. This section of the hotel offered shuffleboard and the pool.

My husband and I stayed at the Galvez with our two sons on our first family vacation. We crossed the same street as a family and splashed in the water at the same spot where I had as a kid. I kept a close eye on the boys to make sure that no sea creatures were relocated to our hotel room.

We betrayed my old friend on our honeymoon, staying down the street at the seemingly more exciting Flagship Hotel that stretches over the water.

For our first anniversary we returned to Galveston and, short on money, spent one night on the beach and the next in a motel. I eyed the Galvez longingly as we drove past.

Although the Galvez was built in 1911, she has worked hard to keep up her stunningly good looks by having the occasional facelift. She is beautiful and easily holds her own against the island's newer San Luis and Moody Gardens Hotels.

And she has a sense of humor, as evidenced on the first part of my most recent visit. I was in the city to attend a meeting at the Galvez. My sister-in-law, Janell, was already in town and decided to extend her trip and stay with me.

When I arrived at the hotel, the desk clerk informed me that I had been upgraded to a suite, where Janell awaited me. The clerk escorted me to room 703. The large plaque outside the door trumpeted Honeymoon Suite.

Janell heard me arrive, threw open the door, and greeted me with a hearty, "Hi, honey!"

The accommodations were romantic, but I was there with the wrong Straach.

She had already ordered a rollaway bed, so the staff knew there was trouble in paradise. The maid was confused about how many mints to leave. (She left three.)

It's just as well we weren't honeymooners. Newlyweds might not have noticed the scaffolding blocking the view of the Gulf, but they probably would not have liked the men working right outside the window. (My friend does like to keep up her appearance.)

On our last morning, as Janell and I packed, the television droned its usual morning lineup. Suddenly, terror came into our sanctuary. We watched in horror as an airplane flew into the World Trade Center.

The pictures of destruction are seared into our memories. It's one of those defining moments: You always remember where you were when you learned of the tragic incident.

Some explanation will be needed when I say that I was in the honeymoon suite of the Hotel Galvez on September 11.

But I was with my dear old friend. History was being made, and our history together was adding a chapter. May there be more, and may they end more happily.

*Adapted from Kathryn Straach's "Texas Travels" column, Dallas Morning News, October 14, 2001. Reprinted with permission.*





Opposite: Colonel Henry Wilcox McGowen brought his bride, Novia, to honeymoon at the Hotel Galvez in 1931, a visit captured in a photograph taken at Murdoch's Pier. Above: Henry Wilcox McGowen III followed the lead of his grandfather and enjoyed his honeymoon with his new bride, Suzanne, at the Hotel Galvez in 2002.

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2002

*Suzanne and Henry Wilcox McGowen III*

*Brownwood, Texas*

On the eve of June 1, 2002, my husband and I waltzed across the lawn at the Hotel Galvez, which has threaded through our family over two centuries. My husband's grandfather and namesake, Colonel Henry Wilcox McGowen, U.S. Army, brought his young bride, Novia, to honeymoon at the hotel in 1931.

The next century found my husband kneeling on the jetty in front of the hotel on Valentine's Day. As the waves crashed and the sun set, he pulled out a crystal slipper he had bought in Ireland. In it was a ring and a promise of love. After many tears of joy and of course a "yes" from me, we enjoyed a private moment in a quiet sunroom of the Hotel Galvez. My husband, who was working in legal development in Kosovo, had planned this day from afar with help from the wonderful concierge, Jackie Hasan. She had a lovely place set up for us and was in on the surprise of my sweetheart's arrival back in the States to whisk me off my feet.

Almost four months later, we had our rehearsal dinner at the Hotel Galvez, were married in Trinity Episcopal Church of Galveston, and had our reception at The Tremont House. After a lovely carriage ride from The Strand to the seawall, we found ourselves waltzing across the lawn of the Hotel Galvez, where we spent the first two nights of our marriage. After eight wonderful years and one sweet child, I still feel like our feet are gliding across time.

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2008

*Michael and Joyce Ann Daniel (BOI)*

*Galveston, Texas*

George Mitchell of the Hotel Galvez has done much good for Galveston Island and has been an inspiration to our Daniel family. Michael and I received annual invitations to George Mitchell's Mardi Gras balls. Because of Hurricane Ike's damage to The Tremont House, the 2009 Mardi Gras Ball, "An African Adventure," was held at the Hotel Galvez that year. Even though we, too, were greatly affected by this devastating storm, Michael and I were more than ever determined to attend the 2009 Mardi Gras event. It was a most needed fellowship of fun: watching the parade in front, catching beads, having my face painted, listening to the great band, dancing and enjoying the delicious buffets.

## MILESTONES

1785

A survey expedition appointed by Bernardo de Gálvez discovers and names the Bahía de Galveston after the Spanish colonial governor.

1900

The Great Storm, beginning on September 8, devastates Galveston, which takes years to recover.

1902

Part of the hurricane recovery process includes a long seawall, started this year and completed in 1960 at 10.4 miles long.

1910

The Galveston Hotel Company announces plans for a new year-round beach hotel to take the place of the seasonal Beach Hotel, which had burned in 1898.

Construction of the Hotel Galvez is launched the same year to help restore Galveston's reputation as a tourist destination.

1911

The hotel opens for business on June 10 at 6:00 P.M. and soon becomes the choice location for island residents' galas and celebrations.

1915

Another hurricane hits Galveston, but the new seawall helps spare the Galvez.

1918

The hotel welcomes 40,000 guests at a daily rate of \$2.

1928

The Baker Corporation purchases the Galvez for \$1 million and undertakes a modernization program.

1931

Ike Kempner and his partners, the original backers, repurchase the hotel.

1937

President Franklin D. Roosevelt makes the Galvez his official Summer White House while he fishes offshore on his yacht, the U.S.S. *Potomac*.

1940

W. L. Moody Jr. and his National Hotel Corporation purchase the hotel from the Kempner group and undertake new renovations. A swimming pool is added, along with a modern motel on the hotel's east end and the members-only Galvez Club.

1942

The U.S. Coast Guard commandeers the Galvez and uses it as its wartime headquarters for the next two years, including as staff living space.

The Sui Jen nightclub, owned by the racketeer Sam Maceo, is renamed the Balinese Room and becomes the most popular nightclub on the Texas coast.

1957

The Galveston rackets are closed down in an island-wide raid on gambling casinos.

1961

Hurricane Carla, second in intensity only to the Great Storm of 1900, wreaks damage on the island.

1971

Moody sells the Galvez for \$1 million to its fourth owner, Harvey McCarty, the first owner with no ties to Galveston, who partnered with Leon Bromberg, a BOI.

1976

George Mitchell purchases the Thomas Jefferson League Building and renovates it as the first of many restoration projects in The Strand.

1978

The Galvez is closed for renovations and reopens the next year under a new owner, the Mariner Corporation, and a new name, the Galvez Marriott.

1979

The National Register of Historic Places adds the hotel to its list of significant landmarks.

1983

During Hurricane Alicia some guests take refuge at the Galvez, which reopens the next year after significant damage is repaired.

1985

Mitchell converts the Blum Building in The Strand into a new Tremont House and launches his new hotel with a revival of the Island's historic Mardi Gras festivals. The previous year he had built another hotel, the San Luis, on top of the historic Fort Crockett's bunkers, along the seawall.

1988

The Galvez is sold at auction after its owners declare bankruptcy. Aetna Life Insurance Company, the mortgage holder, takes over for \$7.68 million.

1993

Mitchell Historic Properties purchases the hotel from Aetna for \$3 million and undertakes a \$20 million upgrade that restores the public spaces to recall their 1911 appearance.

1996

Wyndham International is retained to manage and operate the Galvez as part of the Wyndham group of premier historic hotels, called Wyndham Grand Hotels.

2002

The Galvez becomes a member of the Historic Hotels of America, a consortium sponsored by the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

2005

A second renovation of the hotel, directed by the Mitchells' daughter Sheridan Mitchell Lorenz of Austin, removes heavy drapes obscuring the Gulf views and restores the windows on the lobby level to their original appearance. Fabrics and carpets were also updated; the Oleander Garden was launched; and planning was begun for the hotel's first spa.

2008

The Spa at the Hotel Galvez opens in the space originally occupied by the hotel's barbershop and drugstore.

Hurricane Ike comes ashore, damaging many Galveston buildings; the Mitchells step in to help direct repairs, including the quarter of The Strand's buildings that are owned by their company.

2009

Credited with launching the renaissance of Galveston's historic downtown, George Mitchell receives the Spirit of Galveston Award from the Galveston Chamber of Commerce.

2011

The Queen of the Gulf observes its centennial with a year-long celebration. Activities include a Spanish cultural evening celebrating the birthday of Bernardo de Gálvez, a mass wedding vow renewal for former guests who were married at the hotel, outdoor concerts, and fireworks.