

# Star-Telegram

## District 33 runoff exposes generations-old rift between Dallas, Fort Worth

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FORT WORTH – The new 33rd Congressional District was envisioned as a way to unite minority communities in Dallas and Fort Worth.

But the Democratic runoff for the seat has reignited the generations-old rivalry between the cities.

Either Domingo Garcia or Marc Veasey -- the survivors of the 11-candidate opening round of the Democratic primary -- will likely represent a constituency that stretches from the Fort Worth Stockyards through Dallas' Oak Cliff neighborhood and includes Rangers Ballpark in Arlington and Cowboys Stadium.

Representing the interests of both Dallas and Fort Worth -- something inconceivable only 50 years ago -- will be, as Mike Moncrief said, a "tightrope."

"But I think everyone understands the need for regional support for the common good," said Moncrief, Fort Worth mayor during the landmark Dallas Love Field compromise that will eventually phase out the Wright Amendment but limit the number of gates.

Comments by Garcia have left some constituents on this side of District 33 wondering whether everyone has a firm grasp on the concept of regional cooperation after years of fighting over railroads, airports, stadiums and even places at the table in Washington, D.C.

Garcia said the SUVs put together at Arlington's General Motors plant are "not good for America" and said he has no plans to defend Lockheed Martin's costly F-35 fighter jet, being designed in Fort Worth, even if doing so would save jobs.

More recently, Garcia said that unlike Dallas, Fort Worth has areas that "look like ghettos" because of policymakers' misplaced priorities.

Far from attempts at reconciliation or cooperation, those are fighting words in these parts.

"It's up to voters in the district to assess those comments," said former Fort Worth Mayor Kenneth Barr, who is chairman of the North Texas Tollway Authority and has supported Veasey throughout the primary.

"When AT&T decided to move its headquarters from San Antonio to Dallas, that was a win for Dallas. But it's had a positive impact on business across North Texas."

The Barnett Shale is the same, Barr said. Though the natural gas field is predominantly on this side of the Metroplex, the economic ripples have been felt all over Dallas and Fort Worth.

"We need to move forward in the spirit of Fort Worth-Dallas/North Texas unity," said Sal Espino, a Fort Worth councilman who, along with his former council colleague Kathleen Hicks, has endorsed Garcia.

"I am sure, if elected, he will have district offices in Fort Worth and will also be available to meet with Fort Worth leaders. During this campaign, he has crisscrossed the entire district. As a congressman, I am sure he will take tours of the city's key job centers and visit the large employers," Espino said.

### Teamwork

Regional cooperation, Moncrief said, doesn't mean "there will be a *Kumbaya* ceremony that says there are no longer any issues between us, but I think the Super Bowl showed we can partner up when we need to."

Super Bowl XLV was heralded as a big victory for the whole region, but the area's greatest economic instrument is Dallas/Fort Worth Airport.

The most acclaimed regional accomplishment in North Texas, if not the state, it has generated billions of dollars for the North Texas economy since opening in 1974.

The federal government appropriated almost \$2 million for a regional airport, but the project was abandoned because Dallas and Fort Worth leaders could not agree on construction.

So Fort Worth leaders including Amon Carter Sr. lobbied for an airport that Fort Worth could call its own.

Its population and business interests merited a flight destination, they said. Meacham Field would not work because its proximity to Carswell Air Force Base created risk in shared airspace.

The disagreement was centered in Washington. Fort Worth appealed for federal dollars to build an airport in Arlington.

Carter, among others, accused leaders in Dallas of using their influence in Congress to ask its delegation to perform an "unprecedented procedure" to disqualify the Civil Aeronautics Administration, which oversaw the application process of federal aid, from transactions involving Fort Worth.

"Dallas is historically sensitive to competition," said a memorandum dated April 1, 1948, for use by Fort Worth leaders who appeared before the Senate Appropriations Committee.

It was found in the Amon Carter collection of papers, stored at TCU.

"It seeks for itself the finest facilities of all kinds. That is an understandable civic instinct, but it should not drive a city to the unfair course of asking advantage of Congress," the memo said.

Dallas had recently received \$5 million for improvements at Love Field. Fort Worth said it was fine with all that and the \$20 million more that leaders to the east were expected to request for Love.

"But Fort Worth rejects the ridiculous proposition that it will destroy such a fine facility as Love Field simply by building its own airport in another county, 17 miles from Dallas, with money largely provided by its own citizens," the memo said.

"They want to condemn Fort Worth to a noncompetitive position in the aviation picture, and we confidently predict that, having got Fort Worth's Greater Airport out of the way, Dallas will then confirm the desirability of a 'between cities' site by sponsoring a Dallas airport somewhere between the two cities."

Fort Worth did finally get its airport, opening Greater Southwest near what became DFW.

"For all the battles that we've had between the two cities, I don't know of any greater partnership that's had more positive economic impact here than DFW," Barr said.

"We've fought battles over the years and had disagreements, but all in all it's a remarkable partnership that has brought phenomenal positives into the region."

### **Wright Amendment**

Among those was the controversial Wright Amendment. Authored by Rep. Jim Wright of Fort Worth, the legislation restricted flights out of Love Field to the five contiguous states. It was designed to protect DFW Airport from competition at Love Field.

For more than 25 years, the legislation remained intact. Only in 2005 was an agreement reached between the cities to phase out the restrictions.

Representation in Washington 50 years ago was always an issue.

When Fort Worth won a coveted federal status as an airmail hub, Dallas cried foul.

The new representative in District 33 will encounter issues that might, on the surface at least, appear to be a bear trap of conflict between the cities.

Both cities' massive Trinity River projects need federal help, for example.

But Barr says they don't have to be seen "as competing projects. Typically, they move forward on their own merits. Projects typically aren't competing against one another as much as they are competing against other projects."

Barr expressed confidence that the Fort Worth and Dallas congressional delegations understand the importance of common good for the region versus the tribal mentality of the past.

One illustration of that was the instrumental role of U.S. Rep. Eddie Bernice Johnson, D-Dallas, in progress on the Chisholm Trail Parkway, a road project that has no direct line into Dallas County, much less her district.

### **'Demagoguery'**

I.M. Terrell Elementary School, at Interstates 30 and 35W, is steeped in history.

Once Fort Worth's only black high school, Terrell represented the hopes and dreams of black children and their parents for much of the last century until it closed in 1973.

The school has produced some of the city's best thinkers and most noted achievers, including James Cash, the first black full professor at Harvard Business School.

I.M. Terrell is in District 33. So is Stop Six, a historically black part of Fort Worth in the southeast quadrant, best known for the basketball program at Dunbar High School, another former segregated school that stayed open after desegregation.

In today's political parlance, the southeast quadrant of Fort Worth has been "historically underserved."

As in many other urban areas, a high crime rate and rampant drug use keep business investment low.

City leaders, though, laud the arrival of Wal-Mart on the site of the former Masonic Home and School.

There is much pride among residents.

To many it is not a ghetto, as Garcia called some parts of the southeast quadrant, but home.

"He's from Dallas," Lewis Penigar said while enjoying lunch at Uncle Willie's BBQ at East Rosedale Street and Miller Avenue.

"How can he make an assessment of a community, and he hasn't even been in the environment?"

Penigar was born in the Butler "projects" near Terrell and grew up in Stop Six. After graduating from Dunbar in 1965, Penigar went on to earn a doctorate in psychology.

"His statement is demagoguery," said Penigar, who added that he's voting for Veasey. "He's trying to appeal to a certain class of people that will bring a vote in to him. That's an old technique in politics.

"I think that a candidate who would compromise his integrity like that should not be voted for."

Espino said Garcia "understands the needs of all the diverse communities in the" district, cares about jobs and "will be sensitive to the needs of Fort Worth and Tarrant County."

Likewise, there is disagreement within the community about what Garcia said. Cleveland Harris said Garcia's comment did not offend him "because he's telling the truth."

Harris, an official in the Morningside Neighborhood Association, said that if anyone should be offended, it's city leaders, who did not respond to requests for comment.

Harris criticized Veasey, saying he was ineffective as a state representative, particularly when it came to curbing predatory loan practices.

But, Harris said, he's not voting for Garcia, either -- or anyone else.

"Heck, no," Harris said.

"He's over there in Dallas. I don't know anything about this man or what he has done."

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