

John Campbell

Pampa Class of 1945



John Floyd Campbell was born in McLean, Texas on March 16, 1927. He was the third of six children born to Dr. and Mrs. William L. and Isla Campbell. When Johnny was eleven, the family moved to Pampa where his father opened a new dental practice in 1938. Johnny showed early signs of his leadership abilities when at the age of 13 he helped organize a kids campaign club to help elect a local candidate to Congress. The result was a story of his role in the successful campaign in a Life magazine article, followed by a trip to New York City to be interviewed on the popular national radio show "We The People."

At Pampa High School, Johnny was an active student leader. He was President of his sophomore and junior classes, the sophomore class favorite, and was elected all school favorite as a junior. He participated in student theater productions, was selected to the National Honor Society, was active in student council, and was elected President of the student body his senior year.

In sports, he never let his small size limit his playing. He was an all district back for the Harvester football team, a star player on the district champion basketball team, and served as co-captain in track, qualifying for the state meet in Austin and bringing home a silver medal in the mile. He placed second in the district with Earl Dean Davis as doubles partner on the tennis team and was a consistent winner in boxing tournaments representing Pampa during his high school years. Long time Amarillo sports columnist

Putt Powell wrote at the time that “Johnny Campbell...is the best all-around athlete ever produced in this section.”

With the country in the midst of World War II, Johnny enlisted in the United States Navy in the spring of 1945. After his discharge from the Navy, Johnny attended TCU from 1946-1947 and participated in football, track, and was a Golden Glove boxer. He continued to be an outstanding boxer after transferring to Oklahoma University where he received a degree in Chemical Engineering in 1949. After graduating, he moved back to Pampa and worked as Superintendent for Cabot Carbon Company’s Research Laboratory.

In 1953, Johnny changed career paths, accepting a position as an agent with Panhandle Insurance Agency. He was very successful and became a partner the next year. Johnny stayed very busy and involved in various Pampa civic affairs. He was instrumental in the purchase of the land for the Optimist Club youth baseball complex and then in the building of both the field house and the fields. He was on the Board of Directors of the Kiwanis Club, served as President of the Junior Chamber of Commerce and was given the Distinguished Service Award for the Outstanding Young Man of Pampa. Johnny also served on the state’s eight member National Junior Chamber of Commerce delegation to Washington as part of the Little Hoover Commission program to help make government more efficient.

In September, 1958, John moved his family to Austin after being accepted to the University of Texas School of Law. While in law school, he partnered with fellow student John Warner from Pampa in “moot court competition”. Married and with four young children to support, he went to school by day and worked by night, earning his Doctor of Jurisprudence in 2 years and 4 months. Following graduation, he was honored as the high scorer of all examinees taking the Texas Bar examination. He spent the next 11 years working for an Austin law firm before opening his own general practice. In 1975, he became one of the first lawyers in the state to become board certified in the newly-formed specialty of Family Law.

John was always active in his church during his Pampa years. He was frequently called to surrounding towns to preach as a lay minister and this continued when he moved to Austin. For several years, he served as the lay minister in the nearby towns of Jollyville and Leander. In his home

church in Austin, the University Avenue Church of Christ, he served as both a youth and adult Sunday School teacher and as an Elder. He was even pressed into service as the song leader one Sunday morning, but was not asked again as there are limits to everyone's talents. For many years he was very active in the leadership and growth of the East Austin Church of Christ serving mainly African-Americans.

Always active in sports, John was an early proponent of exercise and running to maintain good health. Long before there were any "runners", John was running daily to help stay fit. As jogging and running became popular in the 1970s, he began competing in 5K and 10k events around central Texas. He has run the premier 10K event in the state, the Capital 10K in Austin, every year of its 35 year history except one (missed to attend the Pampa Optimist Club 50 year anniversary dinner). Over the years he has competed in hundreds of races, often winning his age division. Last year, he competed at the State Senior Games and qualified for the National Senior Games in the 50, 100, 200, and 400 meter runs.

John continues to practice law in Austin, Texas today. He was recently honored by the Texas Bar Association as one of the small number of attorneys who have practiced for 50 years. This is especially remarkable as John came late to the profession at the age of 34. Over the years, he has helped literally thousands of people through difficult times by assisting with their legal problems, often regardless of their ability to pay. He continues to enjoy practicing law and, God willing, has no plans to retire.