

Marker honors county legend

By **BEN TROLLINGER**

He helped take on the KKK and helped create what became the Texas Department of Public Safety, and this week he gets a town's thanks for his part in serving Williamson County.

The state will dedicate a historical marker Thursday, in honor of the late Henry "Harry" Graves, a three-term city attorney for Georgetown who later served as county attorney for three terms and helped convict several members of the Ku Klux Klan.

"It was a very hard, perilous time," county history aficionado and master of ceremonies J.C. Johnson said.

"The Klan was a very influential and secret organization. You didn't know if your neighbor or preacher or judge might be a member. It's to the credit of Harry Graves and men like him that we were able to do at least a small part of getting started a reversal of the influence of the Klan."

A marker ceremony is planned for 2 p.m. Thursday, March 15 at 1409 Olive Street, the address of the historic home where Judge Graves once lived and which is now the home of Marietta Mugford, who applied for the marker.

Born in April 4, 1877, in Wilson County, Mr. Graves attended Southwestern University. During college, he worked for the *Sun* and as a law office stenographer. He passed the bar exam in 1896 at 19 years old.

Mr. Graves, along with district

attorney and future Governor Dan Moody and other prosecutors in the early 1920s, helped convict several members of the Klan for severely beating a Waco man.

"He didn't get the credit and subsequent elevation in position from the trials like Dan Moody did," Mr. Johnson said. "He has not had the name recognition and honor and credit that he deserves, and this ceremony will be a step to regain some of his good name. He left a legacy of public safety and civil rights for Texas."



Harry Graves

Mr. Graves was elected to the Texas House of Representatives in 1929. He wrote the bill that created the Texas Highway Patrol. Mr. Graves ended his distinguished law career on the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals, where he served as a judge from 1937 to 1955.

Mr. Graves died in 1957. He is buried in the state cemetery in Austin.

Participating in the marker dedication are Mr. Johnson, Williamson County Historical Museum Director Chris Dyer; Boy Scout Troop 151; Georgetown. City council member Ben Oliver; Tom Swift and Ms. Mugford and her grandchildren, Benjamin Flood, Carmen Flood, Elizabeth Flood and Garrett Mugford.