

Former congressman named to Baylor chair; donates papers to archives

January 11, 2012

WACO—Former U.S. Congressman Chet Edwards has been appointed the W.R. Poage Distinguished Chair for Public Service at [Baylor University](#) .

Edwards, who represented parts of Central and North Texas in Congress from 1990 to 2011, will serve the university in a part-time capacity as he divides his time between commitments in Waco and Washington, D.C.

Chet Edwards



He will be in-residence at Baylor two weeks per semester, providing public and classroom lectures, primarily in the areas of political science and economics, and leadership development training through various programs in the division of student life. He will serve as host for educational events in the nation's capital for Baylor students who participate in the university's longtime Washington internship program.

With an office in the W.R. Poage Legislative Library at Baylor, he also will assist in processing the Edwards Archive, which consists of more than 200 linear feet of paper and substantial digital materials from his 20 years of public service. Once processed, the collection will be available to scholars and citizens interested in extending their understanding of legislative processes and political history.

“Congressman Edwards has demonstrated leadership for decades, representing Central Texans at the highest levels of government,” said Elizabeth Davis, Baylor’s executive vice president and provost. “We are grateful he is now here at Baylor University and look forward to his

contributions to our public conversation, in the classroom and as we preserve his important legislative papers as part of our permanent research collection in our libraries.”

In addition to assisting with his papers, Edwards will plan and facilitate forums to encourage community dialogue on political issues, deliver the spring lecture for the Poage Library and provide specialized programs that will benefit the educational experience of interns from the libraries and other departments, said Pattie Orr, vice president for information technology and dean of university libraries.

“It is a personal privilege to be able to teach and work with Baylor students and to do so in conjunction with the University’s outstanding faculty,” Edwards said. “I am deeply excited about this opportunity and humbled to hold a Chair named in honor of Congressman Bob Poage, who dedicated his life in distinguished service to Baylor, Central Texas, our state and nation.”

The Poage Library, dedicated in 1979, currently archives the papers of 12 former Congressmen, nine Texas legislators, including Lt. Gov. Bob Bullock, and five judges, as well as numerous ancillary collections.

Edwards was honored with the T.B. Maston Christian Ethics Award in honor of his years of public service and with the Walter Cronkite Faith and Freedom Award from the Interfaith Alliance and the Barbara Jordan/Hatfield Courage Award from the Baptist Joint Committee for his defense of religious liberty. He credits former Baylor President Herbert H. Reynolds for inspiring his commitment to the cause of religious liberty.

Edwards and his wife Lea Ann, along with their sons, J.T. and Garrison, attend Calvary Baptist Church in Waco and McLean Baptist Church in McLean, Va.