

Austin leader 'Red' Lewallen dead at 90

By REBECCA THATCHER
American-Statesman Staff

Services are today for R.J. "Red" Lewallen, a long-time Austin businessman and church leader who was former U.S. Rep. Jake Pickle's first campaign manager and a mentor to Houston Astros owner Drayton McLane Jr.

Lewallen died Wednesday at the age of 90.

Lewallen served in the U.S. Navy in World War II and worked in the wholesale grocery business for 27 years. He also was president and executive vice president of the Texas Wholesale Grocer's Association. He was deacon at the First Baptist church for 61 years and former president of the Austin Chamber of Commerce and the Downtown Lion's Club of Austin.

He was born in Thornton, but his family moved to Austin when he was a baby. His father died of

smallpox when Lewallen was 3 years old, and he began working to support his mother and siblings as a young man. He never attended college, but that did not prevent him from teaching salesmanship at the University of Texas business school at night for five years.

"Red was just born to do good," said Pickle, who represented Austin in the U.S. House of Representatives for about 30 years. "He was born to be a thoughtful and caring civic worker. I always felt privileged just to be in his presence."



R.J. 'Red' Lewallen:
Austin businessman.

Pickle said he and Lewallen were friends from the Lion's Club when he asked Lewallen to manage his first campaign for Congress in 1963. Pickle said he thought Lewallen was so popular in the city that he would be able to generate a lot of support for Pickle's candidacy.

Lewallen worked long and hard as a volunteer to help Pickle win that first election, he said.

Johnny Jones, the founder of the Whitley Printing Co. who has known Lewallen for about 40 years through business and as members of First Baptist Church, said Lewallen did just about everything at the church, from being in charge of the buildings to Sunday school superintendent.

"I just think he was a good person and he wanted to do things that would be helpful to others," Jones said.

Former Austin postmaster Carl

Hobbs said one of the things he remembers about Lewallen was his work ethic.

"Red Lewallen was a hard worker," Hobbs said. "He knew it was important to work. He was a top-flight salesman, and everybody liked him."

Lewallen's friends said Houston Astros owner Drayton McLane Jr. thought of Lewallen as a mentor. McLane, who made his fortune in the wholesale grocery business, was the first winner of the Red Lewallen achievement award given by the Southwest Food Industry Association.

Lewallen's wife of 52 years, Dorothy Parker Lewallen, died in 1981. Survivors include his daughter, attorney Jo Betsy Szebehely of Austin; and his son, Jay Lewallen of San Antonio.

The funeral is at 2 p.m. today at the First Baptist Church, 901 Trinity. Burial will follow at the Austin Memorial Cemetery.



East Elevation



South Elevation





North Elevation





Backroom addition

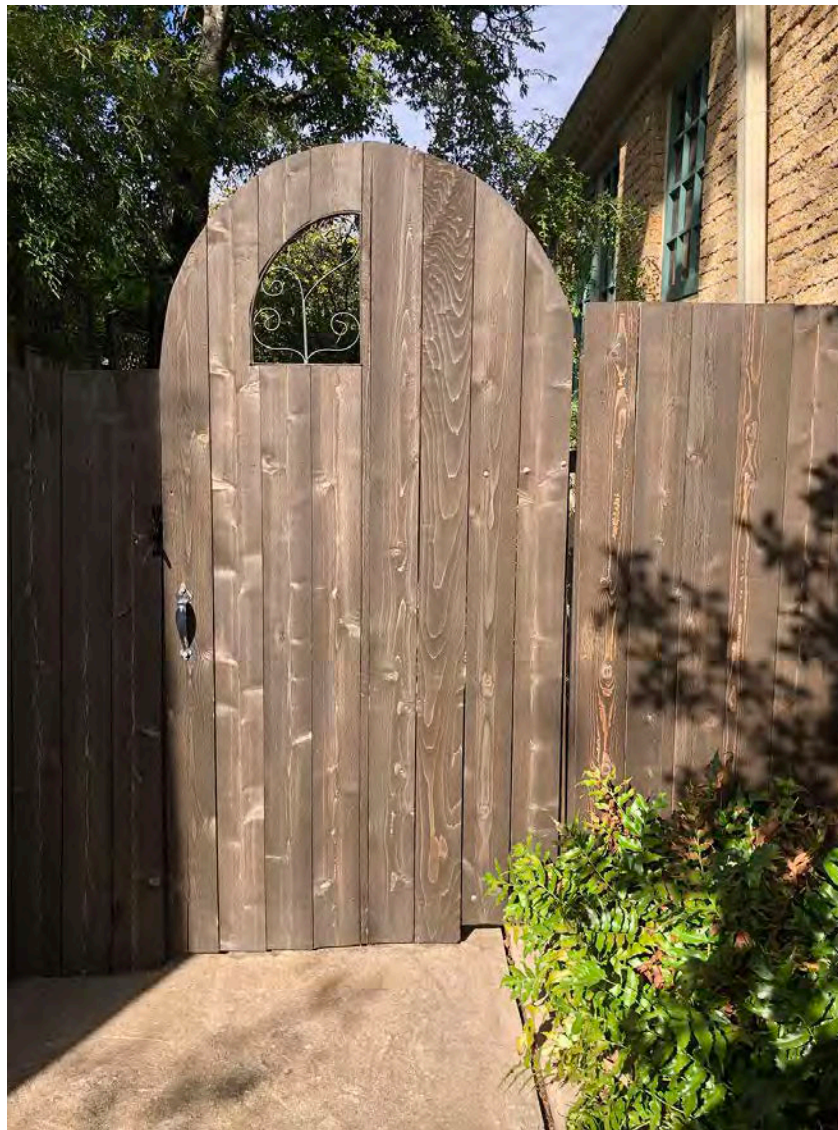
West Elevation

Note second-floor dormer, added for upstairs buildout and barely visible. Dormer cannot be seen from street.

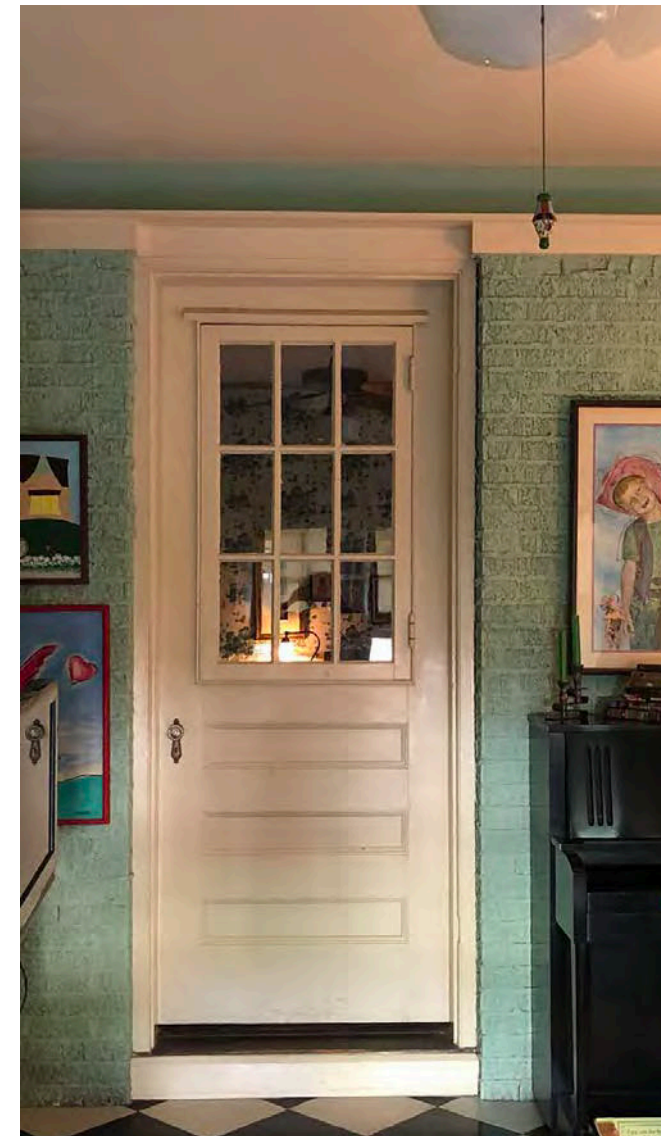
1700 Hartford Road
Preliminary Review
Austin Landmark designation



Original front door



Side gate matches front door



Original back door with hinged window
now leads to addition



Bath with original tile



Dining room light fixture



Interior Doorknob

Allen, Amber

From: Alexandria Sooch [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, March 28, 2023 8:13 PM
To: HPD Preservation
Subject: Historic Zoning for 1700 Hartford Rd

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

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*** External Email - Exercise Caution ***

Hi there,

My family and I own 1609 Hartford Rd Ste A and I received a notice in the mail about the owner-initiated historic zoning of 1700 Hartford Rd. We strongly support this!!

Thank you,
Alexandria and Kevin Sooch

CAUTION: This email was received at the City of Austin, from an EXTERNAL source. Please use caution when clicking links or opening attachments. If you believe this to be a malicious and/or phishing email, please forward this email to cybersecurity@austintexas.gov.