

W. Parker Frisbie Fund for Excellence


Professor W. Parker Frisbie is retiring this year after 36 years in the Department of Sociology and the Population Research Center (PRC) at the University of Texas at Austin. Because his extraordinary scholarship and mentoring have contributed so much to our community, we would like to honor Parker's career by creating a \$25,000 endowment called the *W. Parker Frisbie Fund for Excellence*. Housed within the PRC, the fund will be dedicated to supporting outstanding PRC faculty and graduate student research. Although the initial financial goal is modest, our long-range plan is to raise enough funds to transform the excellence fund into a PRC endowed professorship.

Rarely has one person symbolized the heart and soul of an organization as W. Parker Frisbie has for the PRC. He is our community's icon. Throughout Parker's distinguished research career, he has mentored dozens of students (many of whom are distinguished demographers themselves), he has secured millions of dollars in NIH funding, and he has been almost continuously funded since 1976. His scientific contributions in the areas of urban ecology, family demography, and health and mortality are profound. Perhaps more important than these accomplishments, however, are the traits of Parker as a man. His integrity, honesty, dedication to mentorship, loyalty to his colleagues and students, and his tremendous work ethic—these are the traits of a great man. Throw in Parker's scientific accomplishments, and it is little wonder that he is the icon for the PRC. Of course, Parker also contributes more than a dash of color to our community. His cowboy boots and cowboy hat signal a very important aspect of Parker's identity—he is a Son of Texas.

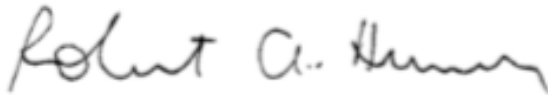
Parker's professional and personal accomplishments clearly reflect his heritage. He was born to Texas ranchers in 1940, married Elaine in 1959 right out of high school, and worked on the family ranch until the late 1960's, when he decided to go back to school and obtain his B.A. in sociology from Southwest Texas State University. Always strategic and with an eye on how best to raise the odds of getting back to Texas to pursue an academic career, he migrated from Texas to the University of North Carolina for his M.A. and Ph.D., both of which he completed in three and a half years! Although universities like Michigan and Berkeley tried to recruit Parker, he returned to Texas in 1972 as an assistant professor in sociology at UT-Austin, achieving the rank of Professor in 1985. Parker served as PRC Director from 1993-1995 and was Chair of Sociology. He remains fiercely loyal to both the State of Texas and to UT-Austin, as well as to his students and colleagues. The UT Sociology Department and the Population Research Center would not be nearly as strong as they are without his research record, his leadership, his loyalty, and his Texan work ethic. To boot, he continues to run his family ranch on weekends—running cattle, fixing fences, riding horseback, and educating his granddaughters in the ways of Texas ranching. He is truly both a first-rate scholar and a cowboy and perhaps the most unique yet down-to-earth and honest person in our field and the University.

Two donors have already pledged a total of \$15,000 to the *W. Parker Frisbie Fund for Excellence*. We are now calling on Parker's colleagues, friends and former students to help fully fund this endeavor. We ask for your support in whatever amount you can give to make this endowment a reality. Funds from this endowment will support the research development and significant accomplishments of PRC faculty members and graduate students.

We are grateful for your generosity in celebrating Parker's distinguished and influential career and to the work to which he has devoted his life.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mark Hayward". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "M".

Mark Hayward
Director, Population Research Center
Professor of Sociology

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robert A. Hummer". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "R".

Robert A. Hummer
Chair, Department of Sociology