

# FORT BEND COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION

## *ORAL HISTORY COMMITTEE*



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### Abstract: **Roy Cordes, Jr.**

Roy's maternal ancestors moved to Sugar Land from several northern states to find jobs at Imperial Sugar Company or Sugarland Industries as early as 1900. His paternal ancestors, originally from Germany, moved to the US in the 1870s.

Mr. Cordes was born and raised in Sugar Land. After WWII, his parents owned and operated several local businesses in Sugar Land; and his father was mayor of the city from 1972-1981. Roy's grandfather was the Justice of the Peace who signed his birth certificate. His grandfather and parents' involvement in local government inspired him to also serve in public office: Sugar Land City Council; County Judge of Fort Bend County for 4 years; and in 2006 elected as County Attorney and still serves in that position.

Roy and his wife Helen have been a powerhouse couple in the county, involved in many local charities and community groups.

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## Interview Summary

### People (in order mentioned in interview)

Alma Meyers Cordes – paternal great grandmother  
 Betty Jane Friend Cordes – mother  
 Harold Cordes – uncle  
 Helen Rae McHenry Cordes – spouse  
 Hugo Henry Cordes – paternal grandfather  
 Roy Cordes, Sr. – father  
 Ethelina Wilhemina Cordes – aunt  
 Bud Childers – former county attorney  
 Beverly Friend – aunt  
 Catherine Friend – aunt  
 Charles Leo Friend – maternal grandfather  
 John William Friend – uncle  
 W L Friend – maternal great grandfather  
 Gerald Hines – major land developer  
 Bill Little – served on Sugar Land commission

Bill and Debbie Schwer – friends

### Places / Businesses

Gulf Coast Alzheimer's Association  
 First Colony Master Planned Community  
 Fort Bend County, Texas  
 Fort Bend Regional Council  
 Imperial Sugar Company  
 Richmond/Rosenberg, Texas  
 Royal Dutch Shell  
 Sperry-Sun Corporation  
 Sugar Land, Texas  
 Sugarland Industries  
 United States Air Force  
 United Way  
 University of Houston  
 University of Texas

### Events

Roy was born in 1947 in Sugar Land. He spent much of his life and career serving the City of Sugar Land and Fort Bend County.

His maternal ancestors moved from Germany to several northern states before settling in Texas and Sugar Land because of available jobs.

Roy's parents owned several local businesses. His father was mayor of Sugar Land and retired as a Lt. Colonel in the Air Force Reserves.

After his four-year stint with the Air Force, Roy earned his Bachelor degree in Finance and a law degree. He rose to the top with several corporations including Imperial Sugar Company. Later, he followed in the political footsteps of his grandfather and father by being elected to many political offices: Sugar Land City Council, Fort Bend County Judge and later as County Attorney.

He and his wife Helen were actively involved in many local charities and community organizations until Helen was struck with the early on-set of Alzheimers'. She received the Ronald Reagan Spirit of Courage Award – the first for Gulf Coast Alzheimer's Association due to her brief volunteer efforts. Roy is still involved in many boards, foundations, and charitable organizations while holding the office of County Attorney. He is proud of his accomplishments as well as that of his ancestors, parents and wife in making the City of Sugar Land and Fort Bend County the best.