Guide to the

David C. Treen Collection

1980-1984

.25 linear feet

Collection Number 242

Prepared by Kathie Bordelon
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CITATION: The David C. Treen Collection No. 242, Box number, Folder number, Archives and Special Collections Department, Frazar Memorial Library, McNeese State University.

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Biographical Sketch

Metairie attorney and U. S. congressman David Treen became the first Republican in more than a century to be elected governor of Louisiana by beating a strong field of Democratic candidates in a 1979 open primary and then edging Louis Lambert by some 9,500 votes in the runoff.

Treen, who served four terms as congressman from the Third District, received the endorsement and support of four major Democratic opponents he defeated in the primary. Lambert, chairman of the state Public Service Commission, received heavy backing from organized labor and the black community.

The Republican governor lost his first try at the state’s highest office in 1971 when he ran against Edwin Edwards, capturing a surprising 43 percent of the vote.

Treen entered office pledging to improve efficiency of government and to enlarge the state’s tax base through expanded industrial and commercial activity and increased employment. He called for a coordinated, comprehensive program of education, training and job placement that would enable every citizen to realize his or her potential, and promised to work aggressively to reduce the high unemployment rate among blacks.

In his campaign “Goals for Louisiana,” he vowed to end “politics as usual” and committed himself to eliminating wasteful political patronage and bureaucracy.

Born in Baton Rouge on July 16, 1928, Treen earned a bachelor’s degree from Tulane University in 1948 and graduated with a law degree in 1950. Upon graduating, he was commissioned as first lieutenant in the Air Force and served for two years.

He became active in the state’s then-miniscule Republican Party, serving as a member of the state central committee, chairman of the Louisiana Young Republicans, and national committeeman. He ran three times against the late Hale Boggs for the Second District congressional seat, winning 32 percent of the vote in 1962, 44 percent in 1964, and 49 percent in 1968.

After losing the gubernatorial race to Edwards in 1971, he again set his sights on Congress. Following a redistricting, he ran for Congress in the Third District and won with 54 percent of the votes cast. He was reelected three times, the last time without opposition.

During Treen’s first year as governor, he campaigned mightily to cut state spending. His efforts so split the legislature that the lawmakers adjourned without approving a capital outlay bill. A special legislative session had to be convened in September to finally get a construction bill passed.

During Treen’s reelection campaign in 1983, his opponent, former Governor Edwards, emphasized the need for strong leadership and promised more taxes. He delivered on his promise. After riding into office with 62.3 percent of the vote, Edwards immediately rammed through a tax increase totaling almost $1 billion, the largest in the state’s history.

From The Governors of Louisiana by Miriam G. Reeves
**Scope and Content Note**

Three-ring notebook entitled, “Accomplishments of the Governor David C. Treen Administration, 1980-1984.” This compilation features reports submitted to the Governor by Secretaries of each State Department summarizing the issues of the day and the accomplishments of those departments during the four-year term of Governor Treen. An Executive Summary of Accomplishments is featured in Section One of the notebook.

**Container List**

| A-4-36 | “Accomplishments of the Governor David C. Treen Administration, 1980-1984” notebook |