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**ATTN: OP-ED EDITOR**

## **LADY BIRD'S LEGACY THREATENED**

**For Immediate Release**

**Contact: George H. Russell 936-891-5245**  
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Dear Editor,

As Lady Bird Johnson was taking her last breaths on July 11, 2007, Texas Department of Transportation (TxDot) contractors were spending hundreds of thousands of tax dollars destroying her legacy by mowing down millions of beautiful wildflowers lining our highways.

My own mother, who died at age 91 on May 27, 2007, had also dedicated her life to protecting "America the Beautiful" from harm. She had dedicated her life savings to purchasing or helping to purchase some six miles of the most beautiful highway frontage in Texas in order to protect and preserve it for future generations.

Before her death, she asked me to communicate with TxDot and beg them to not mow down the wildflowers along the highway until they had finished blooming and had gone to seed. A nationally prominent botanist friend of hers wrote to TxDot with his suggestions about when and how often it would be biologically correct to mow. A TxDot botanist also tried to convince the bureaucrats within her own agency to hold off on mowing until the wildflower season was over, yet her suggestions were ignored as well.

To add insult to injury, the highway frontage lining both sides of FM 135 which leads to my mother's grave deep within the 716 acre Holy Trinity Wilderness Cathedral was mown on the day of Lady Bird's death as an insult to both her legacy and my mother's. Hundreds of miles of Texas highways were skipped in order to mow the wildflowers down in front of three Natural Area Preservation Association preserves and sanctuaries, which had been dedicated in perpetuity by my mother, as if the sanctuaries had been purposefully targeted because of her efforts to protect the wildflowers blooming along their borders.

The wildflowers on two parts of a new Texas Parks and Wildlife Prairie and Piney Woods nature trail were also mown down and in several places TxDot contractors actually trespassed beyond the TxDot Right-of-Way (ROW) onto the nature preserves in order to mow down blooming wildflowers. After the heavy rains that East Texas has experienced during the last few weeks, the ground was saturated in many places along the route taken by the heavy tractors pulling the mowing machines, causing deep rutting. (photos of this damage may be seen at [www.georgerussell.net](http://www.georgerussell.net))

When I attempted to talk to some of the contractors I discovered that only a very few of them could speak any English. It seemed apparent to me that many of the contract workers were not Americans and were probably in this country illegally, taking jobs from our own citizens. Even if TxDot ignorance and abuse of the natural beauty of Texas was going to take place regardless of our efforts to stop the abuse, I would rather the income help feed needy American citizens rather than people, legal or not, who haven't even bothered to learn our language.

The bottom line is that the decades of hard work by Lady Bird Johnson and Marjorie Haw Russell to protect the beauty of our highways and byways has apparently been for naught, which is a great insult to not only their efforts but an insult to the citizens of Texas and all Americans.

George H. Russell

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George H. Russell, an outspoken opponent of the death penalty, is a resident of Huntsville, Texas, known worldwide as "The City of Death."

He is founder of The Patriot Network, and author of its 35+ web sites located at [www.patriotnetwork.org](http://www.patriotnetwork.org), as well as founder of The Universal Ethician Church, an interfaith ministry with a worldwide following via the church's 275+ web sites located at [www.salvationnetwork.org](http://www.salvationnetwork.org).

Russell, 62, is a film producer, educational video producer, environmental activist, historic preservation specialist, photographer, art and antique collector, philanthropist, American patriot and ethician.

Additional biographical information may be found in Who's Who in America, through Internet searches, and in other publications. Images of Mr. Russell suitable for downloading for publication may be found at [www.salvationnetwork.org](http://www.salvationnetwork.org).