



Student Name:
Class Period:
Date:

Meet the Originals

Texas Originals is a radio series about people who made an impact on Texas. You can hear it online and on radio stations around the state. Read or listen to the episode on O'Neil Ford. Then, answer questions about it.

O'Neil Ford 1905–1982

In 1926, twenty-one-year-old O'Neil Ford began an apprenticeship in the Dallas office of architect David R. Williams. Ford had arrived from Denton lacking a formal education, but he possessed a keen eye for design, a talent for drawing, and the confidence and bravado of a showman.

As a young man, Ford had been impressed by the beauty and simplicity of the German vernacular architecture in Fredericksburg and Castroville. In Dallas, under the guidance of Williams, Ford began producing private residences and other structures that incorporated native materials and traditional crafts, with a sensitivity to natural setting and climate.

During his long career as an architect, Ford and his associates designed many notable homes, public buildings, and businesses in Texas and elsewhere. These include the Little Chapel in the Woods at Texas Women's University in Denton, the Tower of the Americas and Trinity University in San Antonio, and several buildings on the Texas Instruments campus in Richardson.

A champion of historic preservation, Ford decried architectural flamboyance and cliché. He was also a passionate advocate for education and the environment.

In 1968, President Lyndon B. Johnson appointed Ford to the National Council on the Arts.

Ford died in 1982, but his ethic of simplicity, integrity, and restraint continues to inspire. "Architecture is scale and proportion," he often said. "The rest is décor."

Check for Understanding: Answer the questions below based on evidence from the episode on O'Neil Ford. Refer to the text included above if needed.

1. Where did O'Neil Ford draw inspiration from as a young man?
2. What were two of the famous buildings that Ford designed?

Going Further: Write or discuss your answer to the question below, supporting your answer with evidence from the episode or additional information you have learned in class.

3. **Taking a Position.** Ford did not have formal training, but he still achieved tremendous success. Of the factors mentioned in the episode, which do you think was most important to his success? Why?