



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 John Goodwin Tower. Then, answer questions about it.

John Goodwin Tower 1925–1991

Texas became a two-party state in 1961, when conservative Republican John Tower was elected to the U.S. Senate. He was the first Republican senator from Texas since Reconstruction.

Born in 1925, Tower grew up in East Texas, the son of a Methodist minister. He served in the Navy during World War II and then earned a master's degree in political science from Southern Methodist University. Tower was teaching at Midwestern State University in Wichita Falls when he decided to enter politics. He ran for the U.S. Senate in 1960, losing to Lyndon B. Johnson. But Tower won the seat the following spring, in a special election called after Johnson assumed the vice presidency.

During four senate terms, Tower was a dominant voice for conservative Texas Republicans. He chaired the powerful Armed Services Committee and promoted the energy and banking industries. Intelligent and sometimes prickly, Tower was a master at moving legislation through Congress. He was a political mentor to Senator John McCain, and to many Texas Republicans including future President George H. W. Bush.

Tower retired from the Senate in 1985. Four years later, President Bush nominated him for Secretary of Defense, but the Senate rejected the nomination. Tower was deeply wounded by the defeat.

In 1991, Tower died tragically, along with his daughter Marian, in a commuter plane crash in Georgia.

Check for Understanding: Answer the questions below based on evidence from the episode on John Goodwin Tower. Refer to the text included above if needed.

1. What was noteworthy about John Tower's election to the United States Senate in 1961?
2. Who did Tower mentor during his time as a U.S. senator?

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.** During Tower's four terms in the Senate, he served as the chair of the Armed Services Committee and promoted the energy and banking industries. If you were a United States senator, what causes would you promote? Why?