



Texas women in banking — yesterday, today and tomorrow

The legacy of leadership by women is deeply rooted in Texas banking. Banking in early Texas was strictly a male role but the beginning of the 1900s brought change. In 1912, the Texas Banking Record contained an article that featured a group of women bank officers who “has established a reputation of good banking.”

Most of the female bankers featured in the article took part in the Texas Bankers Association convention of 1912 that was held in San Antonio. At this convention, the group conceived the idea of a Texas Women Bankers Association to be an auxiliary of the Texas Bankers Association. After consulting with the TBA officers, the first banking association of women in the United States was created. The main purpose of the new organization was to study banking laws and to learn more about banking.

The association prospered until World War I when many women stepped forward to fill important banking positions while the men were in war service. It became difficult for these women to leave their banks to attend meetings, so the association disbanded in 1918. But this time of crisis for our nation created opportunities for women in banking. And they responded valiantly. Women in this time period built a reputation for professional competence, perseverance and loyalty, and they proved to their early supporters that their confidence had been well placed.



In the history of many Texas banks there were women who played integral roles in the ultimate success of their banks. Two of these trailblazing women were Fannie Upchurch of the First State Bank of Bedia and Elizabeth Cheever of Broadway Bank in San Antonio.

Fannie Davis Upchurch was a pioneer banker who led the First State Bank of Bedia through the Great Depression. Mrs. Upchurch assumed the position of president and chairman of the board when her husband passed away in 1922. She held this

position for 60 years until she passed away in 1982. Her obituary account credited her with having served actively as a bank president longer than any other woman banker in Texas and “probably in the United States.” Today, the First State Bank of Bedia continues to be a strong and vibrant community bank.

Elizabeth (Betty) Cheever is another example of exceptional leadership. Mrs. Cheever and her husband, Col. Charles Cheever Sr., who was an attorney stationed at Fort Sam Houston, envisioned a neighborhood bank in Alamo Heights where they lived. Banking was inconvenient for their local community because all the banks in San Antonio were located downtown. They identified the real need for a financial institution to serve the hundreds of military families who had migrated to San Antonio because of World War II, and the businesses that would serve those new residents. They opened Broadway Bank in February 1941.

Col. Cheever was eventually called away to Europe where he spent the war years, and Mrs. Cheever served on the board of directors of the bank until her husband returned from the war.

It was a challenging time for the bank because many of the bank’s customers were in the military and had been shipped overseas, so the default rate skyrocketed for auto loans, savings deposits dropped and
[see “Chairman’s Forum,” p. 20](#)

Chairman's Forum

continued from page 6

some board of directors were getting uneasy. Mrs. Cheever's leadership was the "glue" that held the bank together through this tumultuous time. Today, Broadway is the largest independently owned bank in San Antonio, and it has numerous banking locations in San Antonio and its surrounding areas.

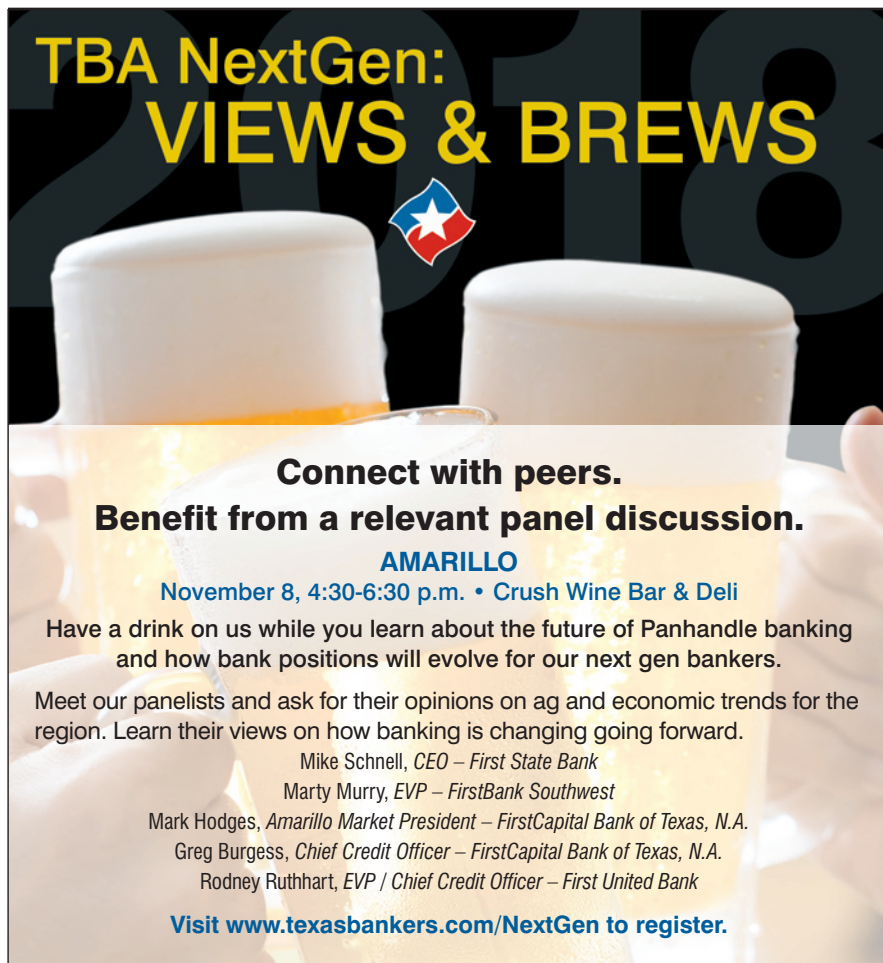
I recently had the opportunity to attend the outstanding "Discovering Champions" bank team conference of Commercial Bank of Texas, N.A. in Nacogdoches. There was a significant number of women bankers, both veterans and emerging leaders, who were recognized by CBTx for their professionalism and leadership.

As TBA chairman, I am seeing this across Texas and it is encouraging. As little as two decades ago, this level of recognition may have been uncommon. But today's women leaders are engaged in all levels of banking from bank operations to senior executives, CEOs and board members.

TBA is active in supporting the leadership and professional development of women bankers. Our association supports and sponsors the Financial Women in Texas. The FWIT mission is to help women in the financial services industry succeed through mentorship programs, networking, education and training.

This year, TBA held its first Women in Banking Conference, and it was well received, not only by women bankers in Texas but from other states as well. The next conference is scheduled in March 2019. And the rapidly increasing numbers of women participating and graduating from TBA's Management Development Program (MDP) has risen dramatically since its inception in 2006.

While progress is being made to engage more women in leadership, much more needs to be done to recognize and promote the leadership of women in our industry as well as in the volunteer ranks of the Texas Bankers Association. TBA is committed to enhance its future efforts to support the leadership and professional development of women and to integrate more women into the TBA's volunteer leadership positions. As our trade association promotes the future of banking, this is the time for us to make a difference and help support the next generation of trailblazing Texas women in banking. ♦



TBA NextGen: VIEWS & BREWS

**Connect with peers.
Benefit from a relevant panel discussion.**

AMARILLO
November 8, 4:30-6:30 p.m. • Crush Wine Bar & Deli

Have a drink on us while you learn about the future of Panhandle banking and how bank positions will evolve for our next gen bankers.

Meet our panelists and ask for their opinions on ag and economic trends for the region. Learn their views on how banking is changing going forward.

Mike Schnell, CEO – First State Bank
Marty Murry, EVP – FirstBank Southwest
Mark Hodges, Amarillo Market President – FirstCapital Bank of Texas, N.A.
Greg Burgess, Chief Credit Officer – FirstCapital Bank of Texas, N.A.
Rodney Ruthhart, EVP / Chief Credit Officer – First United Bank

Visit www.texasbankers.com/NextGen to register.

TBA calendar of events

November

- 19 Future of Banking Task Force meeting, Austin
- 22-23 Thanksgiving break; offices closed, no Texas Banking Weekly distributed

December

- 5 Bank Leadership Council meeting, Austin
- 5 TBA Investment Committee meeting, Austin
- 5 TBA Executive Committee meeting, Austin
- 5 TBA Officer Nominating Committee meeting, Austin
- 5 TBA Past Chairmen's Council meeting, Austin
- 6 TBA Board of Directors meeting, Austin