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# Clarence Redden, Roger Mills Pacemaker

By Ola Redden

Clarence Redden was born in Roger Mills County, near the South Canadian River, north of Cheyenne on his Grandfather Redden's homestead, and resided in the county his entire life except for the time he spent in the armed service.

He got his first real taste of politics when in 1938 he became the Sixth District campaign manager for Leon C. (Red) Phillips when he ran for and was elected Governor of Oklahoma.

In 1939, Clarence was named by Governor Phillips as county commissioner of the Third Commissioners District of Roger Mills County after the death of the present commissioner. At that point, he was the youngest person ever to have served in the office. He served District Three until 1943 when he was inducted into the Navy. In 1946, after his time in the Navy, he was elected to the office of county commissioner in the first district of Roger Mills County and served until January, 1967.

Clarence was elected state president of the Oklahoma County Commissioners Association in December 1962 and served that organization for four years. No one had ever served as president more than two years prior to that time. Over the years, Clarence was honored to have been involved in numerous statewide endeavors as well as having been elected as a delegate to the Democratic National Convention in Los Angeles in 1960.

In the gubernatorial campaign of

1950, Clarence traveled the state organizing and raising funds for the campaign of William O. (Bill) Coe, who was defeated in the democratic run-off by Johnston Murray by fewer than one thousand votes. Clarence was to serve in Bill Coe's state campaign in two unsuccessful attempts for the governor's office — in 1954 and then again in 1958, when J. Howard Edmondson's "Prairie Fire" swept the state in a landslide.

It was while Clarence was commissioner of District One that the Board was petitioned to call a county-wide election for the purpose of voting a hospital bond. When the \$150,000 bond was voted on, it passed by 67%. A \$144,000 federal grant was obtained, earmarked for construction of Roger Mills Memorial Hospital. The hospital was completed and the dedication was set for March 2, 1966.

Clarence maintained his interest in politics throughout his lifetime with more than a passing interest in the destiny of Roger Mills County and the great state Oklahoma. ■

*LOLA REDDEN of Cheyenne is employed in the office of Roger Mills Memorial Hospital. Like her husband, the subject of her article, she attended the Democratic National Convention in Los Angeles and was present at the Pearl Mesta party at which Mesta said, "Come for brunch" — and they did, all five thousand.*



Clarence Redden