



Obituary



Weldon Lucas, Texas Ranger March 17, 1942 – January 15, 2011

**By Donna Fielder / Staff Writer
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Former Denton County Sheriff Weldon Lucas, shown in December 2004, died Saturday at age 68.

After 41 years in law enforcement, Lucas retired in 2004 as sheriff of Denton County, an elected position he had held since January 1993. He spent the previous years of his career with the Texas Department of Public Safety, first as a patrol officer, then as a narcotics sergeant and finally as a Texas Ranger.

Lucas served three terms as sheriff. Jeff Krueger was a county commissioner during Lucas' second term, and he remembers him as a man who fought hard for his employees and his projects with commissioners, some of whom fought back.

"I respected him very much," Krueger said. "People thought I gave him everything he wanted. But sometimes I would say no. He would shut the door and we would argue and scream and yell, but he would not be mad."

Lucas taught him politics, Krueger said. "I was way out of my league, running for a county office. He helped me a great deal," Krueger said.

The two also served many years together on the board of the North Texas State Fair and Rodeo. Lucas retired from the board last summer, Krueger said, and he will be missed in that capacity, as well as an ally in politics. "He was always a true friend," he said.

Lucas was born in Sulphur Springs on March 17, 1942, and grew up in the East Texas area. After his retirement from public office and law enforcement, he spent a great deal of time on a ranch he owned there as well as at a home in Denton.

He married Sandra Brock in 1962. In 1963, a month after they had a baby, he hitchhiked from Jasper to Austin to go to school to be a highway patrolman, he told the Denton Record-Chronicle just before he retired. After 18 weeks of training, he became a patrol officer for the DPS. He and Sandra had three sons, Terry, Jamie and Weldon Jr. Sandra died in 2000.

After serving as a highway officer, he worked as an undercover narcotics officer in Texas and Mexico, and was promoted to supervisor of narcotics operations for 20 counties before becoming a Texas Ranger in 1981.

That move brought him to Denton, where he served as a Ranger assigned to Denton and Cooke counties.

He took office as Denton County sheriff in 1993, having beaten incumbent Kirby Robinson in the Republican primary. He had no Democratic opponent in the election. Lucas became a powerful influence in the Republican Party but his supporters struggled with other factions for control of the party.

In his last interview as sheriff, Lucas said he was most proud of the jail he built and of wresting the money from commissioners for pay raises for his staff.

He also was proud of putting in place a school deputy resource program that stationed certified officers on campuses and a forensic laboratory for the Criminal Investigations Division. He also helped establish the Children's Advocacy Center for Denton County, which provided a private place for trained investigators to work with children who were victims of crime.

He acted as a consultant on the *Walker, Texas Ranger* television series, and several of his deputies had bit parts in episodes.

Lucas gained notoriety for making voting mandatory for everyone who worked at the sheriff's office. A lot of soldiers died so that Americans could have the right to vote, he said in an interview during his term as sheriff. And he said he was going to make sure that blood didn't flow for no good reason.

He also was known for a mandate that his deputies wear white Western hats. He always sported either a white straw hat or a silverbelly felt hat, and he didn't want his deputies wearing black.

Good guys, he said, wear white hats.

