

## Jim Robinson, Biographical Sketch



Jim Robinson, a Houston native, is retired from a long career that included work as a broadcaster and news correspondent, law enforcement and military service, college teaching, and a lengthy career in both state and local property tax administration and local government finance.

A Houston native, Robinson earned BS and MA degrees from Sam Houston State University, and did work toward a doctorate in safety education at Texas A&M University. He also graduated from the National Security Management program of the Industrial College of the Armed Forces (National Defense University).

He began working as a broadcaster while attending Sam Houston State, and in partnership with his father established what is now Majic-102 FM in Houston. After selling the station, he worked as news director for KBRZ in Freeport--concurrently serving as Brazoria County correspondent for the Houston Chronicle.

After broadcasting, he served nearly 13 years with the Texas Department of Public Safety where he was first assigned to the Division of Defense & Disaster Relief and was subsequently promoted to the personal staff of Colonel Wilson E. Speer, the DPS director at that time.

In 1979, the Legislative Budget Board recruited him to transfer from DPS to the new State Property Tax Board where he initially served as associate director for education and standards, and later as both deputy director and executive director of the agency.

The year 1985 found the Harris County Appraisal District in a highly disorganized state of operation and Robinson was asked by the Governor to move to Houston and assist in reorganizing HCAD as deputy chief appraiser. In 1990 he briefly returned to the State Property Tax Board as executive director, but later that year was recruited by the HCAD board of directors to return to Houston and serve as chief appraiser—a position he held until retiring from the district in May 2013.

Later that month he was asked to join the staff in Harris County's Budget Management Department where his initial assignment was to conduct an in-depth financial review of the Harris County Hospital District. Until his retirement from Harris County service in December 2021, his duties included fiscal analysis of legislative proposals impacting the county, coordination of special projects, and representation of the county on the boards of directors of both METRO and HCAD. For the last seven of his nine years on the METRO board, he was as the board's first vice chairman and chair of the board's Operations & Public Safety committee.

While with the Texas DPS, he held a concurrent appointment as an adjunct faculty member in criminal justice at Southwest Texas State University (now Texas State University).

Robinson served 27 years as a citizen-soldier, and retired as commanding general of the Texas State Guard. He holds numerous military awards and decorations including the Lone Star Distinguished Service Medal and the Texas Medal of Merit.

While living in the Austin area, he was elected to the Round Rock Independent School District Board of Trustees and served as board president. His civic and professional activities have included assisting the Houston SPCA with equine rescues and volunteer service as a reserve captain for Harris County Constable Pct. 1, and chief reserve deputy for Harris County Constable Pct. 3.

Robinson has been president of the Texas Association of Appraisal Districts, metropolitan jurisdiction chair for the International Association of Assessing Officers, and vice chair of the police public information section of the International Association of Chiefs of Police. He represented METRO on the board of directors of the Gulf Coast Rail District, and currently is vice president of the board of directors of Harris County Municipal Utility District 457.

With a profound interest in severe weather from his experience in broadcasting and at DPS, he assisted the National Weather Service in development of the NWS emergency managers' weather information network and, for his pioneering contribution to that activity, the National Weather Association presented him its Walter J. Bennett public service award.

In 2010, while serving as chief appraiser of the Harris County Appraisal District, the *Houston Press* recognized him as Houston's Best Bureaucrat, citing him for his "remarkable job making the agency as transparent and user-friendly as can be," and for "always making himself available to the media to explain what's happened when something goes wrong, and looking further if need be."

He is a Registered Professional Appraiser in the state of Texas, a retired Master Peace Officer, and a Certified Fraud Examiner.

Married with three grown children and four grandchildren, he and his wife live in the Champions Area of northwest Harris County.

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