

TWO-PARTY

TEXAS



The John Tower Era 1961-1984

JOHN R. KNAGGS

EP TOWER

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TWO-PARTY TEXAS

The John Tower Era 1961-1984

By John R. Knaggs

Two-Party Texas is the exciting story of the hectic change Texas has undergone from long-standing one-party domination to competitive two-party status, traced from the pivotal first election of John Tower to the United States Senate in 1961 through his last hurrah in the political arena as chairman of the highly significant Reagan-Bush Texas Campaign in 1984.

During the interim, Tower dominated as the political leader of Texas Republicans, sharing the spotlight from time to time with George Bush, Bill Clements, and others. He lands on his feet in four successive tough campaigns: twice with substantial help from liberal Democrats, two other times with a strong coalition of Republicans and conservative Democrats.

Woven into the story are many other politicians and political leaders, plus grass-roots Republicans who held their ground as the political pendulum swung back and forth in unpredictable election cycles.

Twenty-three years of colorful, dramatic, often frustrating political activity are recreated by Austin writer John R. Knaggs. As a participant in the Tower campaign initiatives and as a former UPI reporter, Knaggs contributes an informed perspective to the story of *Two-Party Texas*.

Cover: Election night 1966 at Trade Winds Motel in Wichita Falls shortly after Tower was declared the winner. Photo by Jim Culberson.

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