



Student Name:
Class Period:
Date:

Meet the Originals

Texas Originals is a radio series about people who made an impact on Texas. You can hear it online and on radio stations around the state. Read or listen to the episode on Mary Elizabeth (Liz) Carpenter. Then, answer questions about it.

Mary Elizabeth (Liz) Carpenter 1920–2010

“Give me wide open spaces, a Model T, and a typewriter,” Liz Carpenter once told her mother, “and I’ll see you in the hall of fame.” That confidence carried Carpenter from Salado, Texas, all the way to the White House. She blazed a trail for women in media and helped build a new image of women in politics.

A sixth-generation Texan, Carpenter was born on her family’s ranch in 1920. She moved to the state capital as a schoolgirl and earned a journalism degree from the University of Texas.

Carpenter worked as a reporter in Washington, DC, until joining Lyndon Johnson’s vice-presidential campaign in 1960. When the assassination of President Kennedy catapulted LBJ to the presidency, Lady Bird Johnson hired Carpenter as her press secretary. Together they modernized the role of First Lady, as Mrs. Johnson championed the president’s policies and initiatives of her own, including highway beautification.

Carpenter returned to Texas in 1974 after the death of her husband, Les, but she didn’t slow down. At her home in Austin, she threw legendary parties in support of causes and campaigns. She fought for women’s rights, wrote three memoirs, and was a popular public speaker.

Carpenter died at age eighty-nine. The girl from Salado fulfilled her vow to her mother when, in 1985, she was appointed to the Texas Women’s Hall of Fame.

Check for Understanding: Answer the questions below based on evidence from the episode on Mary Elizabeth (Liz) Carpenter. Refer to the text included above if needed.

1. What position did Mary Elizabeth (Liz) Carpenter hold in the Johnson administration?
2. What did Carpenter do after her return to Texas in 1974?

Going Further: Write or discuss your answer to the question below, supporting your answer with evidence from the episode or additional information you have learned in class.

3. **Taking a Position.** Liz Carpenter was appointed to the Texas Women’s Hall of Fame in 1985. If you could select one woman to be in the Hall of Fame, who would it be and why?