



**Felix Fabian Founder's Award
Southwest Association of Criminal Justice**

Felix Monroe Fabian, Sr. was born in Anderson, Texas on March 3, 1915. He graduated from Lamar High School in Houston, Texas, in 1933. During his early adult life, at the time of the Great Depression, he worked as a movie theater usher and in the oil fields of northeast Texas. While working the oil fields he met Amy Blanchard Seip and they married on April 6, 1936 in Marshall, Texas.

Felix Fabian became a police officer with the Houston Police Department, just prior to the start of World War II. After the war, he enrolled at the University of Houston to earn a Bachelor's degree in police science while still working full time with the police department. Upon graduation in 1950, Felix was offered an instructorship at Washington State University. There, he joined the police science program under the leadership of Dr. V.A. Leonard, who advised him to quickly earn a doctorate in order to give this new and growing discipline some academic legitimacy. So, while teaching, he began work on his Masters of Science degree in police science, graduating in 1953. He then went on to earn his Ph.D. in public administration at the University of Idaho in 1965 at the age of 50.

After having taught at Washington State University for twenty years, he moved on to Lincoln, Nebraska, in 1971, taking a teaching position at the University of Nebraska. Staying only a short time period, he moved back home to Texas in 1974, specifically to Corpus Christi, where he accepted a position in what was then known as Texas A&I. He was given the opportunity to become the first and founding faculty member of the criminal justice program at Corpus Christi and he relished the role. Texas A&I became a state supported university in 1971, opening its doors as Texas A&I University in Corpus Christi on September 4, 1973. In 1977 it became Corpus Christi State University, before joining the Texas A&M system in 1989, where it is now known as Texas A&M – Corpus Christi.

While Dr. Fabian was at Corpus Christi, in the mid-1970s, the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences was beginning the process of creating an accreditation program. Dr. Fabian was instrumental in pursuing accreditation when it became available. The accreditation review occurred during the 1979 and 1980 academic year and the review team consisted of James D. Stinchcomb, Robert B. Mills, and Vincent J. Webb. Corpus Christi State University became the nation's first criminal justice program to undergo accreditation review.

In the early 1960s, a number of criminal justice professors were not happy with the direction that the American Society of Criminology (ASC) was taking. It was moving away from the police science perspective of its founder, August Vollmer, the Chief of Berkeley Police Department and a Professor at

the University of California at Berkeley, who is often referred to as the “Father of American Policing.” Instead, ASC was becoming more sociologically and theory oriented. A number of police science professors, including John P. Kinney, Edward Ferris, and Felix Fabian met in May of 1963 in Pullman, Washington, and created a new organization: The International Association of Police Professors. Dr. Fabian was instrumental in moving this organization forward and served as the second President in the 1964-1965 academic year. Dr. Fabian also took part in promoting the name change at the 1969 annual meeting in Atlanta, Georgia, becoming the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences (ACJS). He would serve as President once again, of the newly renamed organization, in the years 1974-1975. According to his son, John Fabian, Dr. Fabian “was very proud of his involvement with the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences.”

After stepping down as the President of ACJS, Dr. Felix Fabian began work on giving substance to the Southwest region of ACJS. The Academy had divided up the United States into regions, but there was no true southwest organization associated with ACJS. He was so instrumental in creating the new organization, he was elected the first President of the Southwest Association of Criminal Justice (SWACJ) for the 1976-1977 academic year.

According to Felix Fabian’s son, his father “loved teaching and was very popular with his students.” This sentiment is echoed by Dr. Robert Keppel, a professor of Criminal Justice at the University of New Haven and author of the book *The Riverman: Ted Bundy and I Hunt for the Green River Killer*, who was a student of Dr. Fabian’s in the late 1960s. “Felix was my favorite Police Science and Administration Professor,” noted Dr. Keppel, “I took fingerprinting and identification techniques from him.” Dr. Keppel fondly remembers that Felix was “tall, all the time cracking jokes, and was an avid sports follower.” He also noted that “the greatest quality of Felix was his ability to talk at great length with his students.” Dr. Philip Rhoades, a professor of Criminal Justice at Texas A&M University – Corpus Christi, also noted that Felix “supported criminal justice as a social science, he encouraged research and the need to have students develop writing skills.”

Dr. Felix Fabian retired in 1982, and was replaced by twice past president of SWACJ, Philip Rhoades. Felix and his wife then retired to Longview, Texas.

Felix and Amy Fabian had four children: Felix Jr., Micah, John, and William. Felix Jr. was an Air Force officer who died of a heart attack shortly after his retirement. Micah was Felix Jr.’s twin brother, who had died in infancy. John would become an Air Force pilot and then a NASA Astronaut. John flew on the space shuttle Challenger II in July of 1983, and then onboard the Discovery in 1985, where he became the first space scientist to release a satellite from a spaceship and retrieve it after one orbit. Bill (William) was also an Air Force pilot. He died in Vietnam.

Dr. Fabian died on December 18, 1990, and was followed by his wife Amy in 1998

Felix Fabian Founder's Award Nomination Criteria

Awarded to SWACJ members who are deemed deserving of special recognition for their outstanding contribution to SWACJ and the profession.

Prior recipients of the Felix Fabian Founder's Award are not eligible for nomination
Selection Criteria:

1. Active member in good standing of SWACJ for at least five (5) consecutive years.
2. Active involvement in criminal justice education and research for the preceding five (5) years.

3. Through service activities, has made a substantial contribution to SWACJ and to the discipline of criminal justice.

Nominations for the Felix Fabian Founder's Award may be made only by current SWACJ members.

Nominations may be submitted by any current SWACJ member. The nomination should include the following information: (a) a brief summary of the nominee's contributions in accordance with the award criteria, and (b) an explanation of the significance of these contributions. Submission of supporting materials with nominations is encouraged but not required.

All nominations must be submitted electronically to: First-Past-President@swacj.org

References

- Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences. (Various Years). *ACJS Today*. Greenbelt, MD: Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences.
- Bassi, Larry & Rogers, Ronald H. (1976). "The Road to Accreditation." *Journal of Criminal Justice*. 4: 243-252.
- Interview with Dr. Vincent J. Webb, 2001.
- Interview with Dr. Jerry Dowling, 2011.
- Interview with Dr. Robert Keppel, 2011.
- Interview with Dr. John Fabian, 2011.
- Interview with Dr. Philip Rhoades, 2011.
- Morn, Frank. (1995). *Academic Politics and the History of Criminal Justice Education*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing Company.
- Texas A&M University – Corpus Christi. (2011). "A Brief History." Retrieved on line at <http://www.tamucc.edu/about/history.html>