

# Brown has served Angelo well

Several hundred people gathered at the Hotel Cactus Thursday evening to pay tribute to a man whose lasting contributions to this community we have not even begun to fully appreciate. I am obviously referring to City Manager Stephen Brown, who has only a month or so left in the job he has poured his life into for the past 14 years.

I am sure we have had our differences over the years, since this former City Hall reporter for the Standard-Times would have been disappointed if the newspaper agreed with everything the city manager had done. But at this time, those differences have left my memory blank, overshadowed by the memories I have of the many great things I have watched him do for this community.

There are as many different recollections of Stephen's stewardship as there are people who have dealt with him over the years. I offer mine more to provoke thought among others than to attempt to capture the personality and spirit of this very spirited man.

● As I think back to the first time I met him shortly after moving to San Angelo in 1982, it is hard to believe he was in his first year as city manager. His broad knowledge fed a sense of confidence and enthusiasm that I had never experienced with any of the six city managers I had dealt with in other communities.

● At his reception Thursday night, there was a host of former mayors there to say one last "thank you" to Stephen. It was striking to me that they all looked more rested and stress-free than when they were serving as mayor. There were Tom Parrett, Don Butts, Burt Terrill, Jim Edwards and Dick Funk. With the exception of Dick, they all had put in their time and moved on, leaving Stephen behind to keep things held together.

● Another thought I had watching all



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the former mayors is what stark differences there are in the personalities of these men, as well as the various city council members who have moved through the chairs since 1981. And Stephen had to adjust to all of those quirks of personality.

## Stephen Brown has maintained a spirit of enthusiasm second to none.

● Despite the thankless nature of the job, Stephen has maintained a spirit of enthusiasm second to none that you can find in the leadership of San Angelo. While his bulldog nature has ruffled plenty of feathers through the years, it has also cut through the discouragement of bureaucracy that could have left a less committed person behind, having abandoned the missions at hand.

● He is one tough, and shrewd, negotiator. His tactics are the kind that might scare the heck out of you absent one factor — that you could always trust that his intentions were correct and focused on what he believed to be the best interests of the community.

● I don't know that I will ever meet any single person in government more personally committed to the community in which they live than Stephen Brown.

You can differ with the way he gets things done. You can disagree with his decisions. But you would be hard-pressed to effectively argue that this man was not totally committed to the community he served.

● While it would be a mistake to portray Stephen as a learned philosopher, it would be a greater blunder to miss his special West Texas brand of thoughtful vision he has maintained over the years. It has been the fuel that fired that engine of enthusiasm, and kept him persistently pursuing projects that others would have given up on long before. It is these things that will be his legacy, and why I contend we have not gained the full appreciation of what his presence has meant to San Angelo.

He has a real ability to envision the longer-term, bigger-picture needs of the community and stay focused on them over time despite the distractions of politics, local elections, unexpected disasters and occasional lack of support. Projects like the Ivie pipeline, the McCulloch County water wells, the river beautification, the Mercado project, repairs to Twin Buttes Dam, R-UDAT and many others either would not have been possible or as successful without his enthusiastic leadership and support.

We will miss Stephen Brown as city manager. But I believe he would be the first to tell you that the time has come for him to take a break, and to have a different set of skills at the city's helm. He has built a remarkable base from which the next administration can build. He has left this community a much better place than when he took the reins at City Hall.

He can retire with a deep sense of pride in what he has accomplished and the selfless way in which he has carried out his responsibilities.

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their mouths.

Frist provided the same help for Foster in hearings this past week, markedly improving his chances for confirmation. The only explanation by Frist's colleagues is that he was under pressure from his social friends in Nashville.

**PETE'S BRAIN TRUST**

Former Secretary of State George Shultz heads a brain trust, based at Stanford University, to support California Gov. Pete Wilson's forthcoming bid for the Republican presidential nomination.

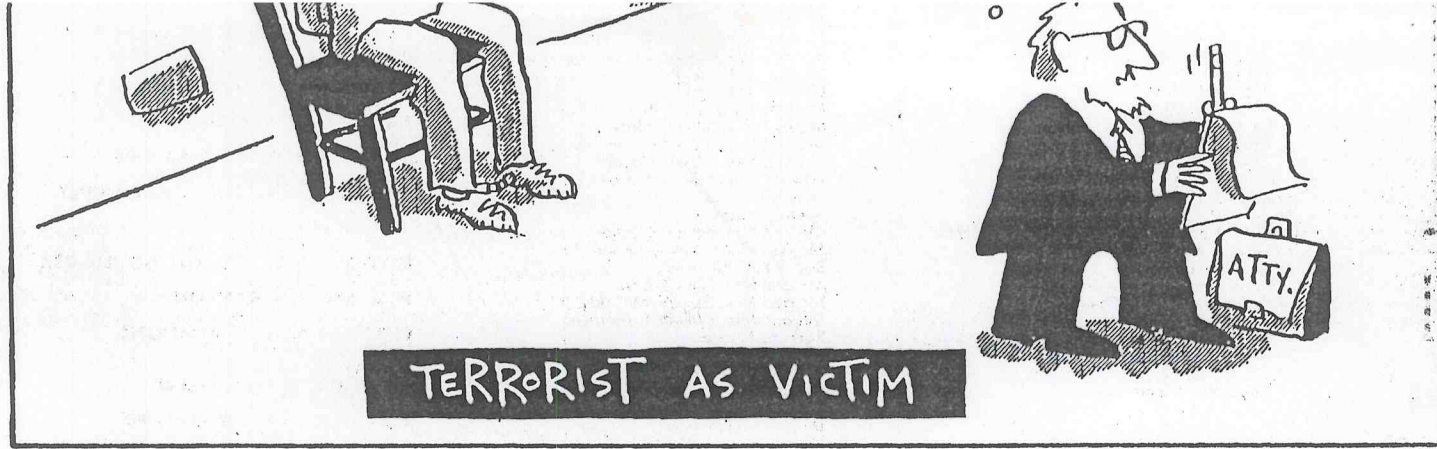
Shultz, who lives in retirement on the Stanford campus, is collaborating in drafting a Wilson federal tax overhaul with two prominent economists associated with the university's Hoover Institution: Martin Anderson, domestic policy chief in the Reagan White House, and Michael Boskin, chairman of the Council of Economic Advisers in the Bush administration.

**DUELING DEMOCRATS**

Democratic National Chairman Donald Fowler and Sen. Daniel Patrick Moynihan, the party's senior officeholder in New York, did not exchange a word before or after their long-distance tiff over what to say about New York Republican Gov. George Pataki.

Moynihan was incensed when he read that Fowler, on a trip to Albany to prepare for the 1996 election, called the newly elected Pataki a "half-assed" governor. Moynihan telephoned Sen. Christopher Dodd of Connecticut, who serves as Democratic general chairman and thus shares party leadership with Fowler, to inform him that he was about to take the floor to demand that Fowler apologize to Pataki.

*Robert Novak's column is distributed by Creators Syndicate Inc.*



# Angelo shouldn't tap McCulloch wells

Editor:

Kevin J. Barry wrote an excellent column in the April 16 edition of the Standard-Times as a tribute to the many contributions that Stephen Brown made to San Angelo while he served as city manager.

While, as pointed out, his intentions for the well-being of the city are notable, we property owners in McCulloch County cannot agree that his continued push to take water from the Hickory Aquifer through wells in McCulloch County is proper.

Several years ago, under Brown's leadership, San Angelo purchased the right to access water in the Hickory Aquifer beneath certain properties in McCulloch County. The Ivie Reservoir had not been built at that time and the purchase was understandable.

Now that the city has access to the Ivie water through the pipeline, it is difficult to understand why San Angelo would pursue further development of the Hickory water when the taking of that water would adversely affect properties and people throughout the Hickory Underground Water District.

Studies conducted for the Hickory Underground Water District No. 1 show that

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unlimited taking of water from the aquifer by San Angelo would adversely affect all of the current and future users of water from the aquifer. The first to suffer would be the members of the extensive Millersview-Doole water system as the level of water in the aquifer draws down.

The city of Brady would suffer a significant loss since all of the city's water comes from the aquifer. Richland Special Utility District serves water to residents throughout eastern McCulloch County and the cities of Mason and Rochelle also take water.

In addition, there are several private property owners and industries throughout the district that legally are permitted to take water from the aquifer. The farmers in the outcrop areas who depend upon irrigation water from shallow wells would have their livelihoods and property values adversely affected.

These users of the water from the aquifer are owners of the surface above the

aquifer and pay taxes to the Hickory Underground Water District. Their need for water is not new; rather, they have depended on the aquifer for decades.

We commend the leadership of San Angelo for its part in developing the Ivie Reservoir and for building the pipeline to bring that abundant supply of good water to San Angelo. According to Brown, that supply amounts to 15,000 acre feet of water (nearly 5 billion gallons) per year in addition to the previous supply.

That development of water was not without significant cost to the citizens of San Angelo. Further development of the McCulloch County wells and building of additional pipelines would further burden the citizens for no foreseeable need.

The members of the McCulloch County Property Owners Association urge the citizens of San Angelo to forgo these additional expenses for water development that is no longer needed and give consideration to the many water users throughout the Hickory Underground Water District who depend upon the Hickory water for their everyday needs.

**Kenneth W. Bull, president  
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