

The Dallas Morning News

Texas' Leading Newspaper

\$3.00

Dallas, Texas, Sunday, July 30, 2017



EDUCATION

To understand what DISD and kids are up against, look at Carver before it's razed



David Woo/Staff Photographer

Paula Wooten prayed for a good day for her grandchildren — 10-year-old A'avryanna (left), 9-year-old l'ivryanna (center) and 11-year-old R'reanna Wooten — in front of their Dallas Housing Authority apartment before they walked to George Washington Carver elementary in May. The West Dallas school won't reopen this fall.

Dallas' worst elementary

By **HOLLY K. HACKER**
Staff Writer
hhacker@dallasnews.com

R'reanna Wooten's dad was murdered five years ago. Her mom is mostly absent. The 11-year-old lives in public housing in the city's poorest neighborhood; her grandmother is afraid to let her play outside and worries about stray bullets.

No wonder that in the mornings before R'reanna headed to the worst elementary school in Dallas, her grandmother prayed: No fights with other kids. No trouble with teachers. None of the frustration that sometimes sent the fourth-grader surging out of her classroom to roam the halls of George Washington Carver elementary.

See **WHEN** Page 16A

PRESIDENCY

GOP ties to Trump show strain

For some, reluctance to cross him turns into open resistance

TODD GILLMAN: Could Trump have saved the GOP push to derail Obamacare? **10A**

FROM WIRE REPORTS

WASHINGTON — In the year since Donald Trump won the Republican presidential nomination, party leaders have been reluctant to challenge a man who has formed a tight bond with conservative voters, even when he upset norms of presidential behavior.

But that reluctance is breaking down. A convergence of contentious issues, embarrassing infighting and shake-ups at the White House have a number of Republicans in open resistance to Trump on multiple fronts.

The most dramatic moment came in the early-morning hours Friday,

when Sen. John McCain, an ailing war hero and one-time presidential nominee, joined two other Republican dissidents, Sens. Lisa Murkowski of Alaska and Susan Collins of Maine, in casting the deciding votes to kill a scaled-back plan to dismantle tenets of the Affordable Care Act — and with it, perhaps, Trump's promise to repeal the health care law.

But the signs of resistance went further.

Nearly every Republican in Congress voted with Democrats this past week to approve legislation tying the president's hands on a major foreign policy issue,

See **TRUMP** Page 10A

DALLAS | HOMEBUYER ASSISTANCE

Feds fault city on housing aid

Families left in lurch as deficiencies found, program put on hold

By **SUE AMBROSE** and **SARAH MERVOSH**
Staff Writers

Dozens of low-income families hoping to buy homes with help from Dallas City Hall are in limbo after federal inspectors found widespread problems with how the city has run the program.

Nearly 60 families — who expected to receive as much as \$20,000 each toward down payments and closing costs — have been

left in the lurch, city officials said.

The Dallas Homebuyer Assistance Program had been a game-changer for people who otherwise could not afford to buy a house: Single parents. A 70-year-old widow on a fixed income. A schoolteacher who earns enough to survive, but not enough to save.

People like Laportia Estell, 34, who works a government job coordinating school field trips. She rented for years, intimidated by how much money she'd need for a down payment

See **HOUSING** Page 15A

PUBLIC HEALTH

Two summer Sundays, one major triumph

Dallas drive in '62 vaccinated nearly a million against polio

By **DAVID TARRANT**
Staff Writer
dtarrant@dallasnews.com

Theda Plunkett was 92 years old, waiting in line for a sugar cube.

Standing beside her in the line snaking out of Lakewood Elementary School was her great-great-grandson, John, 4 years old. He was waiting for his sugar cube, too.

It was Sunday, July 29, 1962, D-Day in Dallas for the fight against the scourge of polio. For the first half of the 20th century, the disease had crippled and killed Americans by the tens of thousands, fall-

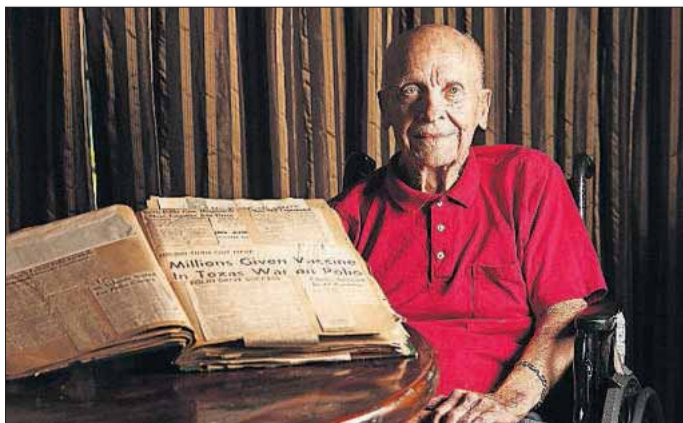
ing hardest on children. Now, there was an answer, the Sabin vaccine — two pink drops dribbled atop those sugar cubes.

Health officials knew the vaccine was effective. The problem was distribution — getting every man, woman and child the necessary dose.

They decided to make a push to vaccinate as many people as possible in one sweeping effort — throwing open the doors of area schools and calling the people in at once.

So it was that last Sunday in July, Theda and John queued up with hundreds of thousands of others to get a thimble-size

See **A WONDERFUL** Page 17A



Rose Baca/Staff Photographer

Dr. Percy Luecke Jr., 91, the pediatrician chosen to help lead Dallas' polio vaccination campaign in 1962, says, "People were dying, and we had an opportunity to keep that from going further."

ONLINE: Hear from the doctor who helped nearly a million people in Dallas get the polio vaccine in 1962. dallasnews.com/video

SPECIAL SECTION



Path to the Hall has been a ball

The Cowboys owner's Pro Football Hall of Fame induction is commemorated with a 24-page special section. SportsDay chronicles Jones' always entertaining career, from his "jocks and socks" introduction to Dallas to the glitz and glamour of AT&T Stadium and The Star in Frisco. **Section N**

NATION

Federal judge blocks new abortion limits

A federal judge has blocked Arkansas from enforcing four new abortion restrictions. **4A**

Partly cloudy



H 94 L 77

Metro, back page

BUSINESS

A look at CEO pay in North Texas

AT&T's Randall Stephenson was the best-paid CEO at North Texas companies in 2016. **1D**

INSIDE

Lottery	2A	TV	7E
In Depth	3A	Puzzles	7-9E
Nation	4, 7, 11A	Homes	Sec. H
World	12-14A	Jobs	Sec. J
Sports TV	2C	Travel	Sec. K
Personal Tech	5D	Editorials	1P
Jumble	10D	Letters	2-3P

©2017, The Dallas Morning News



'A wonderful example of ... pulling together'

Continued from Page 1A

paper cup that held a lump of sugar laced with the vaccine. As temperatures soared into the mid-90s, a steady stream of young and old, rich and poor, families of every race and ethnicity joined the lines.

It was probably the largest peacetime mobilization ever undertaken in North Texas, and one that required a mutual trust among government officials, the public and the medical community that seems unfathomable in today's polarized environment.

"It was a wonderful example of people in the country pulling together. Just like rationing in World War II, people went along with it," said Dr. Tony Herring, a pediatric surgeon and chief of staff emeritus at Scottish Rite Hospital for Children, which for decades provided treatment for polio victims.

It was a bold idea. Even in 1962, with about 700,000 residents, Dallas was one of the largest cities in the country, ranking 14th in the 1960 census two years earlier. The population of Dallas County was around 1 million.

"The overall goal was to provide vaccine for everybody, adults and children, and to not have any more polio," said Dr. Percy Luecke Jr., the pediatrician whom the Dallas Medical Society chose to help lead the campaign and persuade the public to get immunized.

Now 91 and recovering from surgery at a rehabilitation facility near his Lakewood home, Luecke clearly remembered the mass immunization campaign that he led 55 years ago. Pulling himself up straight in his wheelchair, he said of his ambitious goal: "I wanted a million."

The post-World War II baby boom of the 1950s was in full swing when Luecke graduated from medical school at Washington University in St. Louis and returned home to Dallas to practice pediatric medicine.

But even in an era of national triumphalism, marked by a booming economy and unshakable faith in American know-how, polio remained a terrifying threat.

A pediatrician, just like his father, Luecke had seen how the disease could devastate.

The polio virus was passed hand to mouth via tiny particles of feces. Little kids would pass it to their friends or siblings. Swimming pools and movie theaters — so popular in rising America — became places to avoid, especially in the summer months, considered high season for the contagious disease. "It was very easily spread," Herring said.

Polio resulted in temporary paralysis in the muscles, especially the legs, that could last a few weeks, months or even a lifetime. In some cases, when breathing muscles failed, the disease proved fatal.

Children diagnosed with the disease were considered highly contagious for three to six weeks and would be immediately isolated in polio wards, typically at Parkland Hospital. Such was the fear of polio that in the early 1920s, some towns in Connecticut banned New York City children from visiting.

"And in some cities you could be put in jail if you didn't report that your child had polio," said Herring, who became an expert on polio after producing a 2003 documentary, *A Fight to the Finish: Stories of Polio*.

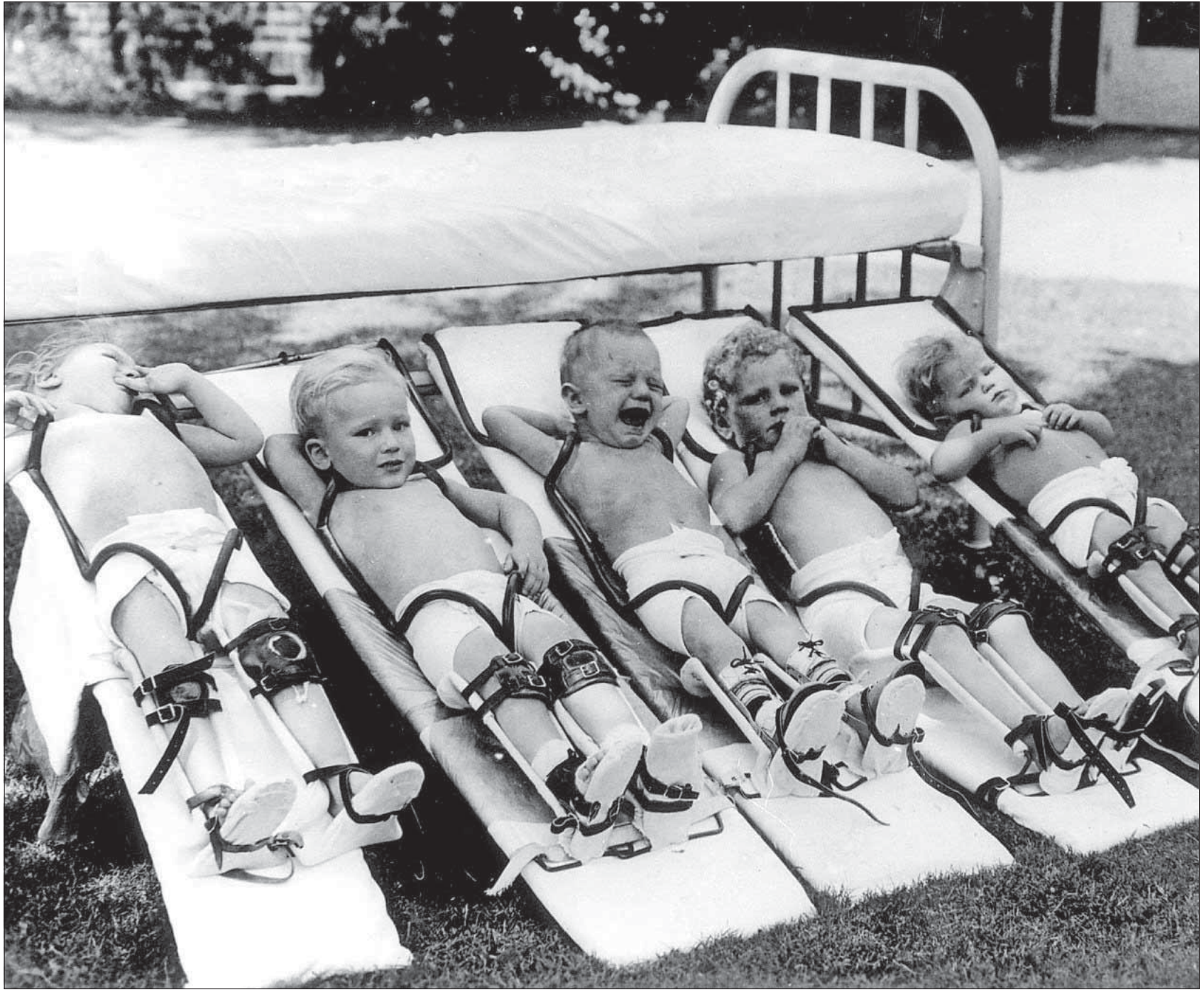
After children with polio in North Texas passed the stage of contagion, most of them went to Scottish Rite Hospital in Dallas, which started in the early 1920s as a place to treat victims of the disease.

That included leg braces and intensive physical therapy. For those who couldn't breathe on their own, there were respirators, better known as iron lungs, which became the iconic object associated with the disease — a round, metal cylinder that covered the body except for the head.

A hard-hit state

The worst year for polio was 1952, with 58,000 cases reported across the United States. That year, the epidemic hit Texas as hard as any state. Cases swelled from around 900 at the end of World War II in 1945 to 4,000 in 1952 — 7 percent of all cases in the U.S. that year.

"Polio was the biggest public health problem in the United States at midcentury," said Dr. James Luby, an infectious diseases specialist and professor at UT Southwestern who was in medical school in the late 1950s. "We were seeing increased number of cases in Texas. It was for-



Under shade trees at Texas Scottish Rite Hospital in Dallas in 1940, young polio patients reclined on stretchers designed to straighten and stretch their legs.

Texas Scottish Rite Hospital



Paul Richard Alexander, shown at age 9 in an iron lung, was struck with polio right before he began elementary school in 1952. It left him without use of his limbs but didn't take away his ability to paint.

tunate that the vaccine came along in 1955."

That year, a scientist in Pittsburgh, Dr. Jonas Salk, developed a dead polio virus that could be used to inoculate people from the living disease. Vaccinations began right away. A few years later, in 1961, Dr. Albert Sabin developed an oral version that proved more effective. The Sabin oral vaccine was a live virus, weakened in the laboratory, then dried and frozen before being shipped around the country. Cheaper and easier to administer, the oral vaccine was seen as the silver bullet in the fight against polio.

The public embraced the work of Salk and Sabin, both of whom were hailed as heroes. Fear of the disease overcame any anxiety about taking the vaccine, Herring said. "I don't think there was much resistance," he said. "People were so afraid of polio and so excited that they had something that would prevent it."

Dallas campaign

Luecke was 35 years old when the Dallas County Medical Society chose him to be the spokesman for the local campaign. His job was to help mobilize community leaders and persuade the public to take the new vaccine, and he was fully committed to the cause.

"People were dying, and we had an

opportunity to keep that from going further," he said.

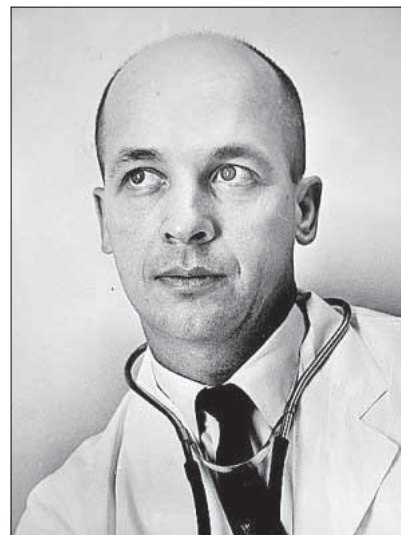
Luecke quickly became a familiar face throughout Dallas as he spoke to different groups and at news conferences. *The Dallas Morning News* described him as calm, well-respected by his peers, "a neat dresser and partly bald." Married with four children, he emphasized wherever he went that his family would also get the oral vaccine.

The mass immunizations were scheduled for back-to-back Sundays — July 29 and Aug. 5 — to make sure that those who couldn't make it the first Sunday had another chance.

Religious and political leaders from all corners of Dallas County promoted the campaign, which also drew strong support from the medical community, schools and businesses. Luecke needed about 30 volunteers, including doctors and nurses, in each of the 90 senior high, junior high and elementary schools where the vaccine would be distributed.

Volunteers stepped forward from the Red Cross, PTAs and the National Foundation for Infantile Paralysis — the group that organized the March of Dimes, a grass-roots movement that relied on thousands of volunteers.

When the Red Cross issued an appeal for volunteers, more than a thousand residents called in and officials



Percy Luecke Jr., shown in 1962, said his goal was for a million people to be vaccinated.

were fielding 175 calls an hour in the morning. Some people complained that they had tried calling for hours and couldn't get through.

Altogether, the number of volunteers swelled to 4,500.

Ravaging disease

The week leading up to the first Sunday drive, *The News* carried a story that Dallas County had recorded its 15th case of polio, a 13-month-old girl who was paralyzed in her legs and back.

The number of polio cases throughout Texas was rising sharply. Through the first 28 weeks of 1962, Texas recorded 113 cases of polio, according to federal public health data reported by *The News*. During the same period a year earlier, there had been just 31 cases.

John McKee, then the president of Scottish Rite, urged the public to take the mass immunization campaign seriously. "If people don't realize how serious polio is and the importance of getting the Sabin vaccine July 29 [or] Aug. 5, tell them they can just drop by the hospital," McKee said.

To help speed up the process, newspapers printed registration forms to be handed in at the vaccination centers. Grocery stores also carried the forms.

Three days before the drive, officials said they were prepared to handle as many as 3,000 people an hour at each site. Everyone 6 weeks of age and over could get immunized. The vaccine was free, but donations of 25 cents or more would be accepted to help defray costs.

Even those people who had already received the earlier Salk vaccine shot were encouraged to get the oral vaccine as a booster. The oral vaccine also eliminated the possibility of a person being a carrier.

On July 26, three days before the drive, the vaccine arrived at Dallas Love Field. It was stored in big freezers loaned to the campaign by Gen-

eral Electric.

The day of the drive, at least 500 automobiles on loan from new car dealers cruised neighborhoods to give free rides to the vaccine sites, which opened at noon and closed at 6 p.m.

Any worries about turnout quickly faded. At Thomas Jefferson High School north of Love Field, 3,500 people had already taken the vaccine in the first 35 minutes. Ten thousand people were vaccinated in six hours at Adamson High School in Oak Cliff.

There were some lighter moments. One volunteer took a call from a man who asked if he could still take the vaccine because he'd "been hitting the old bottle pretty hard," according to a story the next day in *The News*. At Hillcrest High in North Dallas, a professional clown entertained residents lined up for blocks.

By the end of the day, the preliminary results showed 590,000 Dallas County residents received the Sabin oral vaccine that Sunday. Another 233,220 residents got vaccinated the following Sunday, Aug. 5. But officials estimated that the final tally would come in at around 950,000, ensuring an immunization rate well over 90 percent.

"I think the public was convinced that the problem was significant. They were convinced as to the efficacy of the vaccines," said Luby, the professor in the division of infectious diseases at UT Southwestern. And members of the public were convinced they could play a role in defeating the disease by getting immunized, he said.

And they did. Since 1979, zero cases of polio have originated in the U.S., according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. On a few rare occasions, the disease has been brought into the country by a traveler.

The best way to keep the U.S. polio-free, according to the CDC, is to maintain the high immunity against polio by vaccination. When Luecke would go around town speaking to groups during the 1962 campaign, he would occasionally encounter someone who was afraid of taking the vaccine.

"Not as many as there are now," he said, lamenting the rise of anti-vaccine advocates.

"A lot of people today have their own ideas of what they should do," Luecke said. "There was not as much of that back then. Most of the time in the 1960s and before, people accepted immunizations."

He's proud of the way the people of Dallas County pulled together that last Sunday in July 1962.

"I was glad to be involved with that," he said. "I was very satisfied with the way it turned out. We got a whole lot of help from everybody."

Twitter: @davetarrantnews