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Doris Bowman, Bob Murphey and Bob Bowman

BEST OF EAST TEXAS AWARD

East Texas humorist and goodwill ambassador Bob Murphey of Nacogdoches has received the East Texas Historical Association's first annual Best of East Texas Award.

Endowed by Bob and Doris Bowman of Lufkin, owners of Best of East Texas Publishers and Bob Bowman & Associates, Inc., the award was presented to Murphey on September 30, 2000, during the Association's fall meeting in Nacogdoches.

The award will be presented annually to an individual, organization, event or project deemed "one of a kind and the best there is" in its own category.

The award consists of a sculpture by Paula Devereaux Kurth of Santa Fe, New Mexico, who produced the statue of Thomas J. Rusk in Nacogdoches, as well as other pieces of art in Texas and New Mexico. It is a replica of an old-fashioned water pump and handle, signifying that the recipient "primed the pump" for other East Texans.

"For 35 years, Bob Murphey has carried the humor and heritage of East Texas to every corner," said Bob Bowman. "He is a man who believes in simple pleasures and a good honest laugh."

"Doris and I wanted to see a method whereby the Association could annually honor laymen, educators, professional historians, speakers, or writers ... unique men and women who are known for their love of our special corner of Texas," said Bob Bowman. "We hope the award will become a symbol of the people who truly are the best of East Texas."

Bob Bowman is the author of twenty-five books about East Texas and is a past president and fellow of the East Texas Historical Association. He is also chair of the Association's Ottis Lock Endowment, the administrative trustee of the Pineywoods Foundation, and a member of the Lufkin City Council.

Doris Bowman is a past director and committee chair for the Association. She is also a past president of the Texas School Public Relations Association and is currently the vice-chair of the Texas Council for the Humanities.