

BILL ANALYSIS

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By: Hegar
Administration
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AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

Accomplished Texans who serve as positive role models for today's youth are deserving of special recognition, and one such individual is Shiner native William Elmo Merrem, the first person in the Lone Star State to become an Eagle Scout. Born on May 22, 1897, Mr. Merrem was the son of Edgar Jacob Merrem and Willie Crane Merrem and grew up in Shiner alongside his three siblings. He joined the town's first Boy Scout troop as a charter member, and on July 3, 1913, he was awarded the Eagle Badge. Not only was he the first Texan to receive the highest rank that scouting offers, he also was the first person west of the Mississippi River to do so, and he joined that elite group when there were fewer than 50 Eagle Scouts in the entire United States.

The leadership and dedication that Mr. Merrem demonstrated as a Boy Scout served him well throughout his life. A 1914 graduate of Shiner High School, he served his nation during World War I as a pilot in the U.S. Marine Corps. After completing his studies at Southwestern University, he went on to earn his law degree at the The University of Texas at Austin School of Law and embarked on a distinguished career in business. He served as vice president of the Houston Oil Company, president of the Southwestern Settlement and Development Company, and founder and vice president of the East Texas Pulp and Paper Company, and he held prominent positions in the Texas and American Forestry Associations.

Mr. Merrem and his wife, the former Mary Elizabeth Caldwell, were longtime residents of Houston and active members of the congregation at St. Luke's United Methodist Church. Through the years he volunteered his time to assist various civic initiatives, and he was a 32nd-degree Mason who devoted more than 50 years to the charitable work of the Shriners. After a lifetime of service and achievement, he passed away on June 29, 1982, at the age of 85. A pioneering figure among the Boy Scouts of Texas and a successful business and community leader, William Elmo Merrem stands as a meaningful source of inspiration for young people, and it is indeed appropriate that his legacy be celebrated and appreciated throughout the Lone Star State on the anniversary of his birth.

RESOLVED

That the 82nd Legislature of the State of Texas hereby designate May 22 of each year from 2011 through 2020 as William Elmo Merrem day in honor of the first Eagle Scout from Texas.