

PREFACE

Had he not died unexpectedly in July 2007, John Hill would have written this preface with my help. Sadly, it now bears only my name.

John wanted to write this book about his years as attorney general because he considered those the most exciting and fulfilling in his long and active life. Those years, to John, meant more than his success in the 1950s and 1960s as one of the state's most respected trial attorneys, his two campaigns for governor, his service as chief justice of the Texas Supreme Court, or his service to and friendships with governors and presidents.

The attorney general's office offered greater opportunity for doing good for more people than any other state office, he believed, and the many good results he achieved validated the wisdom of his determination to provide Texans with first-class legal advocacy. His goal was a book that would demonstrate that these types of accomplishments—as well as his commitment to enforcing the law without fear or favor, a standard to which he believed too many in government did not adhere—were within the grasp of any public official who simply refused to cut corners for political expediency.

We agreed that I would write the book in his voice. To reconstruct the events and decisions that shaped his administration's destiny, the book would meld together his recollections shared during several interviews with me, his three oral histories, published references, and my thirty interviews of his former assistants and others in and out of government who were involved. To help readers imagine conversations conducted in private meetings where comments were not recorded, we relied on the memories of living participants to create dialogue. Quotations in the text lacking a source citation were derived using this technique. Each chapter was reviewed for accuracy by the principal assistants and others who served as my sources. John, of course, had the last say, with his edits of my manuscript. We submitted it to Texas A&M University Press in January 2007, five months before he died.

John chose depth over breadth in directing content. Among the dozens of knotty issues engaged by his staff but passed over for inclusion in the book were deep involvement in a massive constitutional revision
