

# LOBBY WATCH



★ TEXANS FOR PUBLIC JUSTICE 609 W. 18TH ST., SUITE E, AUSTIN, TX 78701 PH: (512)472-9770 FAX: (512)472-9830

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## Did the A.G. Award Sinecures To Some 'Special Assistants'?

### • Failed House Candidate Jill Warren Gets \$100,848 Salary

The new millennium was hard on Jill Warren. The dot com bomb exploded in April of 2000—one year after she started a job at a high-tech law firm that has been forced to layoff attorneys. Then she lost a November Texas House bid in which she spent \$60,000 of her own money.

But Warren has friends in high places. Although she apparently filed no formal application for the job, Attorney General John Cornyn hired her in January 2001 as a “special assistant attorney general” with a salary of \$100,848 a year. Cornyn assigned Warren—a former technology and telecommunications law associate at Brobeck Phleger & Harrison—to litigate some redistricting cases and he made her his point person on both “Homeland Security” and the remains of Texas’ 1998 tobacco settlement.

Is Warren’s new job a political sinecure designed to support a political candidate until some future race? Or is she the best possible person for a critical post at the Office of the Attorney General (OAG)? *Lobby Watch* filed an open-records request covering the four special assistant attorneys general listed on the OAG’s directory. These rec-

ords suggest that Attorney General Cornyn, who said after his 1998 election that he would not employ “political hacks,” first decides to hire an individual as a special assistant and later finds work for them to do.

The OAG could not provide the following information on Jill Warren and fellow special assistants Edna Butts, Joe Crawford and John Greytok:<sup>1</sup>

- Who created these positions and the rationale for their creation;
- How the openings were publicized;
- Applications or resumes from any competing applicants; and
- Job performance reviews that they received.

Five months after he started with the OAG in 1999, the first hired of the four special assistants wrote a two-page memo entitled “Thoughts on the Role of Special Assistant.” In this memo, John Greytok brainstorms a broad range of jobs that he might be able to tackle for Cornyn, from “crisis management” to being the lead attorney on a case to identifying new priorities for the agency.

### Cornyn’s Special Assistant Attorneys General

Special Assistant AG	Hired	Salary	Chief AG Work	Prior Job
Edna Ramon Butts	3/19/01	\$95,088	HMO probes	Hughes & Luce lobbyist
Joseph V. Crawford	5/1/00	\$108,756	High-profile suits	Wright & Greenhill attorney
John Greytok	4/5/99	\$74,760	Redistricting suits	Private practice (after Akin Gump)
Jill Warren	1/4/01	\$100,848	Redistricting suits	Brobeck Phleger & Harrison/failed House bid
TOTAL:		\$379,452		

In a one-page document produced a year after Greytok started, the OAG describes special assistants as discretionary lawyers who work directly for the attorney general on “special projects” that:

- Require unique or rare expertise that a particular Special Assistant A.G. has;
- Involve work of a particularly complex, momentous or sensitive nature;
- Are of particular interest to the A.G.; or
- Any other project selected by the A.G.

### John Greytok

Redistricting litigation was one such special project assigned to Greytok. In two such cases, this former Akin Gump litigator represented the state in redistricting lawsuits filed by the Associated Republicans of Texas (ART), a group that he has been politically active in, according to his resume filed with the OAG. Greytok returned to private practice in February 2002.<sup>2</sup>

### Edna Butts

A second special assistant that Cornyn appears to have hired with no formal application came straight out of the revolving-door lobby. After working for the OAG, the Insurance Department and House Speaker Billy Clayton, Butts became a Hughes & Luce lobbyist for insurers, predatory lenders, pharmaceutical interests and other corporate clients. She reported an annual lobby income of between \$650,000 and \$1.3 million at the end of 2000—just before Cornyn hired her.

Butts’ main OAG work has been on health insurance probes. Her health clients three months before Cornyn hired her included National Heritage Insurance, PhyCor and HealthSouth Corp.

### Joe Crawford

Adopting the third person in an early 2000 A.G. job solicitation, Wright & Greenhill attorney Joseph Crawford wrote, “As [Texas Association of Defense Counsel] President during the [1995] session, he played a major role in the drafting and eventual passage of these [tort-limit] laws as well as being invited to be present at the ceremonies when Governor Bush signed them into law.”

Crawford’s main OAG work has been as lead attorney in high-profile litigation involving gambling and Medicaid fraud. Crawford also was the lead attorney defending ex-Governor Bush in “Funeral Gate.” That case was filed by a Funeral Service Commission director who said that she was fired for investigating a funeral corporation with financial ties to former Assistant Attorney General Andy Taylor and then-Governor Bush.<sup>3</sup>

Cornyn’s U.S. Senate opponent, Ron Kirk, is unlikely to dwell on revolving doors or sinecures. While he was Dallas’ Mayor last year, the lobby/law firm Gardere Wynne paid this former lobbyist \$227,634 to work just a couple of mornings a week. •

### Edna Butts’ 2000 Lobby Clients

Lobby Clients on 12/31/00	Max. Value of Contract
EDS/National Heritage Insurance	\$200,000
Alliance of Auto. Manufacturers	\$100,000
Boeing	\$100,000
Capital Metro. Transit Authority	\$100,000
Cash America International	\$100,000
PhyCor	\$100,000
DeVry University	\$100,000
Du Pont Pharmaceuticals	\$100,000
Environmental Systems Products	\$50,000
TX Dept.of Public Safety Officers	\$50,000
TX Civil Justice League	\$50,000
TX Dental Hygienists' Assoc.	\$50,000
First Cash Financial Services	\$25,000
ACE Cash Express	\$25,000
E.I. DuPont de Nemours	\$25,000
IFS Corp.	\$25,000
Exxon Mobil Corp.	\$25,000
HealthSouth Corp.	\$10,000
Surplus Lines Stamping Ofc. of TX	\$10,000
TX Assoc. of Check Cashiers	\$10,000
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>\$1,255,000</b>

<sup>1</sup> The OAG said that the only information that it withheld fell under exceptions covering personal address, phone, Social Security number and family information.

<sup>2</sup> Greytok’s mother, Marta Greytok, is an ex-Public Utility Commissioner who became a revolving-door lobbyist for such clients as MCI WorldCom and PGE Corp.

<sup>3</sup> See “Pols Try To Bury Funeral Probe,” *Lobby Watch*, March 9, 1999. The parties reached a settlement.