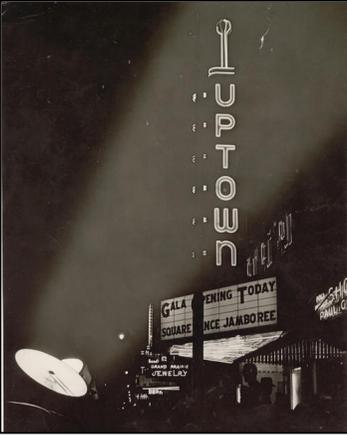


## **Uptown Theatre 120 East Main Street Historic Marker #62**



In 1948, two brothers, Jerry and Sherman Silver, and their sister, Helen Meagher Fisher, a young widow with three children, bought the Wings Theatre at 123 West Main Street and leased the Texas Theatre at 110 East Main Street in Grand Prairie and moved to Texas from Minnesota. The brothers, who were already in the theatre business, were excited about the possibilities in this small but growing Texas town of 13,241.

The Silver family saw a market for first-run movies in Grand Prairie and soon began the design and construction of their third and most ambitious Grand Prairie movie house, the Uptown Theatre. The Uptown opened on March 17, 1950 as a first-run movie theatre with 1,000 seats and a small stage for live performances.

Considered a state-of-the-art theatre for its time, the Uptown featured a sloped floor in the seating area for optimal viewing of the stage and screen, a glass enclosed “Cry Room” in the back for mothers with babies, spring-loaded seating units and oversized chairs with ample leg room for customers “of size”. A large canvas mural adorned the lobby wall depicting the history of Grand Prairie from its pioneer beginnings to the Dallas skyline as could be seen from Grand Prairie in the 1950's.

Entertainment over the years included films, kiddy shows, stage shows, beauty contests, midnight shows for the Ling Temco/Chance Vought late shifts, and personal appearances by celebrities promoting their films. In the 1960's, the theatre featured battles of the bands, Rocky Horror Picture shows and go-go contests.

When first opened, adult tickets were 35 cents and children tickets were 12 cents. The Uptown became known for its popular and unique pickle juice snowcones which recycled the pickle juice left in the jars of giant pickles, and Old Maid popcorn bags of the half-popped kernels left on the bottom of the popper. During the 1950s, parents routinely dropped off their unattended children as young as five years old for Saturday's kiddy shows. Playing fulltime usher and part-time babysitter at the kiddy shows, Donna Meagher, Mrs. Fisher's youngest daughter, was ten years old when she started working in the family business. Her older sister, Pat, was 13 and working in the more responsible areas of concessions and box office.

Helen Fisher and her husband, Lee Fisher, bought out the Silver brothers in 1959 and continued to operate the Uptown until 1965 when the Uptown ownership was transferred to Mrs. Fisher's daughter, Donna Meagher Easterling, the young usher who by then had become a local attorney. Mrs. Easterling continued to operate the Theatre as a movie house well into the 1990's. But as mega-plexes and multi-screened Theatres became the norm, the Uptown eventually relented to the inevitable and closed as a movie theatre.

The city of Grand Prairie purchased the property in 2005 with plans to restore the Uptown Theatre to its former glory, but this time primarily as a live performance venue. The restoration and renovation design was performed by noted San Antonio Architect, Killis Almond, FAIA, who has numerous theatrical restoration and renovation works to his credit throughout the country. The Uptown Theater reopened in 2008.