

Laredo politics



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Jose C. Martin Jr. " Old Party" which included the Laredo Independent School District Superintendent Vidal M. Trevino, Sheriff J. C. Martin, Sr. , District Attorney Philip Kazen, and U. S. Representative Abraham Kazen. The Old Party survived for eighty-four years because of its ability to recruit former opponents, was under investigation for wrongdoing in office which includes the looting of taxpayers through fraudulent purchase orders, particularly for vehicle batteries. In 1978 Aldo J.

Tatangelo entered the six-candidate nonpartisan race with confidence representing a new beginning, a new administration, with new ideas, and new things to do. Tatangelo wanted to challenge the " Old Party" or the " patron system," by which voters defer to one or two usually elected officials in the community with the expectation that those individuals will provide personal favors when needed. In his three terms in office, Tatangelo made several changes. He believed that Laredo was a city that could prosper.

This election brought change, but he could not have succeeded without the help of his fellow citizens. In addition to the street paving, Tatangelo is credited with establishing a pension plan for city employees, reorganizing the city street department, developing a parks and recreation department, creating a planning and zoning commission, and promoting affordable housing for low-income families. He considered the employee pensions the most important of his contributions to public affairs.

Tatangelo won his second and third terms under the city manager format. He was term-limited under the charter and could not seek a fourth term in 1990. Laredo mayors are restricted to two consecutive four-year terms plus up to

two years of an unexpired term. They may run again after sitting out a term. A month after the election, Martin was indicted by a federal grand jury on one count of mail fraud and was ordered to pay a \$1, 000 fine and \$201 , 118 to the city in restitution. He was sentenced to serve thirty weekends in the Webb County Jail.