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Dark Money Billionaire Harlan Crow Invests In Texas Property, Politics and Bells
 Harlan Crow has invested at least \$550,000 into Eva Guzman's campaign, the largest single donation he has made by far.

By **justicefortexas**

Posted on January 25, 2022

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For Whom Does This Bell Toll? Dallas Billionaire Harlan Crow

Texas developer is building a 228-foot-tall bell tower outside his office

window; 'The ideas behind it are important. I am not'

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Eva Guzman Finds A Generous Donor for Her AG Run

A wonderful time at the home of Kathy and Harlan Crow. **#WomenforEva #LeadingRight #LeanInRight** pic.twitter.com/7CTDT0eOGw

— Texans for Eva Guzman (@EvaGuzmanForAG) **January 25, 2022**

DALLAS—Even by the standards of Texas billionaires, the developer Harlan Crow has extravagant tastes. His home boasts a 77-car underground garage. He displays priceless statues of dead dictators in his backyard garden.

His latest project in particular stands out. Mr. Crow is constructing the tallest privately built bell tower in the U.S. to rise in at least half a century. Unlike nearly all such structures, it isn't located on a university campus or seminary. The 228-foot tower sits directly outside his office window, in the heart of Dallas.

Mr. Crow calls it a gift to the city and a reminder of the promise of entrepreneurial ambition. He has spent \$25 million on it, including trucking in limestone from the same rock formation used to construct the Empire State Building. He hopes to create an Old World-style landmark for Dallas, a city more customarily associated with charmless new construction.

The tower, set to be completed this month, is called the Campanile, after the Italian word for belfry. In its Italian pronunciation, the word rhymes with heely, but early in the project's inception, Mr. Crow issued a decree to his architects. The tower's name was to be spoken in a flat American lilt. Now it rhymes with genteel.

"We do live in America, so why not Americanize it?" Mr. Crow says.

The Campanile is hardly genteel when it rings. Atop the tower is a 30,000-pound brass bell, which Mr. Crow named Horatio, after Hamlet's most loyal friend. Horatio is held in place by a 15,000-pound "deadstock." They were both custom-made in the Netherlands and ferried across the Atlantic. It took a team of engineers several weeks to figure out how to lift Horatio to the top of the tower, using Dallas' largest crane.

Yet when Mr. Crow and his team earlier this year gathered around the base of the tower to hear the bell toll for the first time, Mr. Crow gave a withering review.

"Too quiet," he said, of what his architects, the Beck Group, said was the third-largest bell in America. The team rewired the equipment to up the volume to 105 decibels, roughly equivalent to a chain saw.

Horatio is controllable by smartphone app, and will be able to be rung remotely. Who has the controls? "Not me," says Beck Group director Kevin Newton. "Probably Harlan." (Mr. Crow says he isn't sure who will control the ringing.)

There is a reason why almost no one builds bell towers anymore, and it isn't just because there are easier ways of telling the time. For one, they are a headache. The

latest comparable private project, begun in Naperville, Ill., in 1999, is located in a public park and was later taken over by the city. That tower is now closed and the city earlier this year approved spending more than \$2 million in repair costs. "The option was to tear it down or repair it to make it structurally sound and keep it for the future," says Naperville city spokeswoman Linda LaCloche.

"It would be fair to say," says former Naperville Park District Commissioner Mary Lou Wehrli, "the enthusiasm outran the money."

The Campanile in Dallas has a stalwart patron in the 72-year-old Mr. Crow. A lifelong history buff and collector whose private library includes documents signed by Christopher Columbus, Amerigo Vespucci and Robert E. Lee, Mr. Crow is especially passionate about preserving America's art archives. His collection includes paintings, sculptures, furniture and tapestries, among other items.

Mr. Crow says the Campanile is a monument not to himself, but to the spirit of America. He commissioned 10 sculptures made of bronze, marble and limestone of figures including Aristotle, economist Milton Friedman and the Roman goddess Fortuna, to be displayed in its winding interior stairway and around the base. These are figures which inspired the American way of life, Mr. Crow says.

The Campanile will be closed to the public for safety reasons. Many still remember that in 1966, a man armed with a rifle went to the top of the main building tower at the University of Texas at Austin and killed 15 people.

As Mr. Crow puts it, "there are no income producing possibilities" for his tower. At 25-feet by 25-feet, it can't even fit an elevator.

Scion to a great fortune, Mr. Crow nonetheless had to earn it anew. His father, Trammell Crow, built an eponymous real-estate giant that was once the country's largest landlord. By the mid-eighties, overstretched by borrowed money, the company was near bankrupt. Harlan Crow took it over, restructured the debt, sold off assets and rebuilt the family's riches.

"I have been a very lucky person," he says.

The idea for a tower percolated in Mr. Crow's mind for years, until in 2006 his investment company bought the deteriorating former site of Old Parkland, Dallas' first public hospital, later a mental institution. Though some in the community hoped the 9.5-acre site would be housing or a public complex, Mr. Crow turned the site into one of the city's most expensive office complexes, including office quarters of his own that include an underground rotunda and expansive collection of art.

His company had to apply for special exception to city planning rules to build the Campanile, which is taller than what is normally allowed on the site. The Dallas Mayor's office declined to comment. His architects also spoke to the Federal Aviation Administration about flight paths at nearby Love Field, the architects and FAA say.

Paul Ellenbogen, president of a neighborhood planning district called the Oak Lawn Committee, says Mr. Crow's representatives presented plans to his group about the tower and an expansion to the complex earlier called "Freedom Place," but he's never

been invited inside the grounds.

“There are tall shrubs and we can’t see in,” Mr. Ellenbogen says. “They don’t want the riffraff bothering them.”

Mr. Crow says the complex regularly gives tours to local and international groups.

The Campanile will stand long after he is gone, much as a university campus would outlive its namesake, he notes. “The ideas behind it are important. I am not,” he says.

Rick Keating, his longtime architect and friend, sees a simple motivation.

“He’s a unique person with a lot of money,” Mr. Keating says. “The real story is Harlan does what he wants to do.”

Mr. Crow notes that the Campanile will stand long after he is gone.

Credit: WSJ

When you know screenshots of tweets are necessary when Texas and the Corrupt Judiciary is involved...

Billionaire Harlan Crow Invests In Texas Property, Politics and Bells
<https://t.co/9gA8fvtgJS> #BurningMan pic.twitter.com/kTbzJBSZwN

— lawsinusa (@lawsinusa) **September 4, 2023**

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Billionaire Harlan Crow Invests In Texas Property, Politics and Bells

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