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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
May 20, 2008

## **NOAA Honors Texas Leader in Fisheries Management Posthumously**

NOAA's Fisheries Service will honor Ralph Rayburn posthumously for his lifetime contributions to ensure the conscientious management of marine resources in the Gulf of Mexico.

Elaine Rayburn, the widow of Ralph Rayburn, will receive the honor at a ceremony in Washington, D.C. on June 2 as part of the agency's third annual Sustainable Fisheries Leadership Awards Program.

"The health and sustainability of the planet's ocean resources is of paramount importance for the world's environmental, economic and human wellbeing," said retired Navy Vice Adm. Conrad C. Lautenbacher, Ph.D., under secretary of commerce for oceans and atmosphere and NOAA administrator. "The contributions of our honorees inspire others and enhance NOAA's work to conserve and manage our nation's marine resources."

"Ralph Rayburn influenced a generation of Gulf Coast fishermen and fisheries managers with his ability to achieve common sense solutions to protect resources while assisting fishermen," said Jim Balsiger, acting assistant administrator for NOAA's Fisheries Service.

In his distinguished and diverse career, Rayburn represented the shrimp industry as executive director of the Texas Shrimp Association, worked for state and federal resource management agencies – the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department and the Gulf of Mexico Fisheries Management Council -- and finally helped direct university research as associate director of the Texas Sea Grant College Program at Texas A&M.

Rayburn was instrumental in bringing about the Texas Shrimp Closure in the early 1980s. This closure of federal waters to trawling for a period of 45 to 60 days each year allows shrimp to grow to a larger more valuable size. Mr. Rayburn's greatest contributions were the diplomacy and honesty he used with environmental groups and the shrimp industry to help resolve raging conflicts over incidental catches of turtles by shrimp fishing boats.

For the full list of Sustainable Fisheries Leadership award winners go to: [www.noaa.gov](http://www.noaa.gov)

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, an agency of the U.S. Commerce Department, is dedicated to enhancing economic security and national safety through the prediction and research of weather and climate-related events and information service delivery for transportation, and by providing environmental stewardship of our nation's coastal and marine resources. Through the emerging Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS), NOAA is working with its federal partners, more than 70 countries and the European Commission to develop a global monitoring network that is as integrated as the planet it observes, predicts and protects.

On the Web:  
NOAA Fisheries Service: <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov>