

Robert T. "Bob" Baskin

August 24, 1897—December 29, 1976

Elected 1960, 1964 County Commissioner

Bob Baskin made a lasting mark on southern Nevada during the almost-fifty years he called it home. He served on the City Commission (now the City Council) during the postwar boom that brought floods of tourists and new residents to the valley. He also worked as a restaurateur opening the Round-Up Drive In and later his own restaurant that served as a hub for political dealings. He was elected to serve on the Clark County Commission in 1960 and served two full terms before he retired in 1969. Baskin influenced several important developments for Las Vegas. As a city commissioner, he worked to encourage the federal government to open the Nevada Test Site. On the county commission, he became a proponent of McCarran airport and pushed for its expansion.



Baskin was born in Kaufman, Texas. He spent his teenage years in Clarksville, Arkansas where he graduated from high school. He returned to Texas and began working for the Fred Harvey Company. While in Texas, he completed a degree in business. Baskin then spent three years serving in the US Army during World War I. Following the war, Baskin relocated to Tulsa, Oklahoma where he opened his first restaurant and also married. In 1929, Baskin relocated with his bride to Las Vegas and he bought the Quality Bakery. After selling the bakery, he invested in one of the first supermarkets in the city. In 1946, he opened the Round-Up Drive In at the intersection of Main Street and Las Vegas Boulevard.

The first office Baskin held was as a member of the Las Vegas City Commission from 1946 through 1949. During his tenure on the City Commission, he worked with other Nevada politicians to secure the development of the Nevada Test Site. He pledged to represent all Las Vegasans and help transform the city into the "most progressive city in the great southwest." In 1948, Baskin was defeated in his reelection bid by Wendell Bunker.

Following his service on the City Commission, Baskin returned to the restaurant business. He sold the Round-Up in 1954. The following year, he and Garland Miner opened Bob Baskin's Restaurant on 5th Street. His restaurant served as a gathering place for politicians and pundits to wheel and deal. He also operated the restaurant in the El Cortez under an agreement with J. Kell Houssels.

Baskin returned to public office in 1960, when he was elected to the Clark County Commission. During his time on the Clark County Commission, he was vocal about the need for gaming companies to pay more in taxes to support education and infrastructure for the county. He also worked to improve the local airport and for growth of Nellis Air Force Base. He served on the Fair and Recreation Board and also as chair of the Nevada State Gambling Tax Committee. Baskin decided to retire following his second term and did not seek reelection.

In 1976, Baskin died at a local nursing home following a long illness. In 1977, the city honored him by naming a park after him.