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The Unitor

Exchange Club of Tuscaloosa

Chartered February 9, 1923 • Affiliated with the National Exchange Club

www.tuscaloosaexchangeclub.org

Thursdays at Noon • Indian Hills Country Club • In service to community, state, and nation

December 8, 2016

TODAY: Al Romanello

Host: Betsy Jarnigan

Al Romanello is originally from Tampa, Florida. He graduated from Thomas Jefferson High School in Tampa in 1944. He was called to serve in the Army during World War II and was part of the Pacific invasion of Okinawa. After service, he went into the education field where he worked in the Tampa school system for 36 years. Once he retired in 1989, his wife (Betty Jean Sapp Romanello) brought him back to Tuscaloosa.

Next Week: Foundation Awards

The Club will not meet 12/22 or 12/29/2016

1/5/2017 Susan Benke Villages for Aging in Place
 1/12/17 Brian Winters How to Secure a Network
 1/19/17 UA Shot Gun Shooting Team
 1/26/17 Tour Alabama Baseball Stadium

Countdown to Cookoff

Saturday, February 11, 2017



9 weeks

Countdown Sponsor:

Banks Quarles

Memories to Treasure

Turns Out He WAS a Star...

by Phyllis Gamble

I don't remember exactly when I met Dave, but I do remember understanding that he was one of a kind before we were ever introduced. In 2005, the local banking community was all abuzz about the Reynolds returning to Tuscaloosa after a long time away. All the cool kids who had grown up in Tuscaloosa and known Dave forever, laughed as they told stories of him to a point that he took on an almost mythic air in my mind.

Over the next few years, I got to know Dave myself through the usual rounds of Chamber events, banking functions, Exchange Club meetings, and later through our association at Capstone Bank. And the man lived up to the hype. Kristy once characterized him as being like a D List Celebrity, after trying for half an hour to



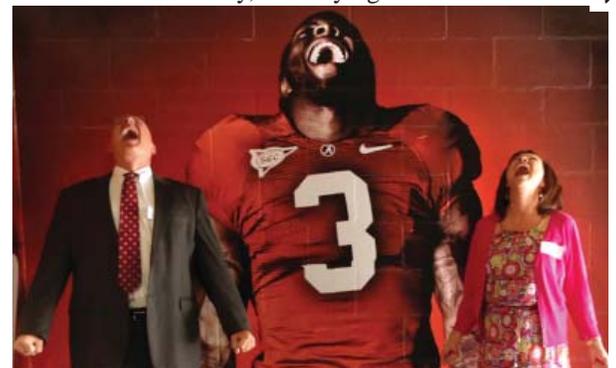
He Rolled
 into
 Nazareth
 by
 Robert Morgan

He rolled into Nazareth, no longer feeling about half-past dead. **David Reynolds**, aka Mr. Van Halen and the Big Man, has moved on to his next Gig, where he sits with the Bandmaster, vintage Strat in hand, Fender Reverb turned up to the appropriate "11," jamming and waiting for us to join in the Song.

We all want to tell our story. And we want that story to mean something. We yearn to live our lives so that we leave something of value behind. Let me tell you a little of the riches David left behind for us.

Many of you are from Tuscaloosa and have known David all of your lives. I moved to Tuscaloosa in 1979 to resume school. I would have first come in contact with David in 2005 when he rejoined the Exchange Club after he and Kristy moved back to town.

"Catch you a cannon ball and take it on down the line." David was that cannon ball, a benevolent force of nature. (cont'd, p.2)





Justin Rollings	Dec 4
Brock Jones	Dec 13
Dexter Hancock	Dec 29

Sam Gambrell provides the birthday list

Robert Morgan (con'd.)

When he threw back that bald head and let go his laugh, your day changed for the better. The room would light up and your problems became smaller.

He was one of the most giving people I've ever known. He was the first to buy lunch (often using the bank's card). His generosity was evidence of a kind and loving heart. David gave of himself, tirelessly volunteering for many projects and causes about which he felt strongly.



We had the great fortune of playing music together. [pictured at a club social above] He once joked that he had been fired by more rock groups than he had been in. We played for some coastal fishing fund raiser on the third floor of Brown's Corner (don't ask, it was some connection David had). We did songs ranging from Allman Brothers to Johnny Cash to the Beatles. We had kicked off this song when it was sonically apparent something was not right. I think the song was in the key of A. I look over and David is banging away in the key of G. I got his attention and mouthed, "We're in A." He threw back that bald head, belted out that life-changing laugh, and immediately started wailing in A. For David, it was about enjoying the crowd and letting the good times roll.

One Friday we went to lunch with his close friend, Justin Little, and someone from Capstone Bank. He was using a cane by then and he was a little wobbly. As we headed out I asked him how he was really doing. "Aw, Robert," he said. "I'm so blessed. I've got these great doctors. I've got a wonderful wife and good friends. What else can you ask for? How are you?"

My dear friend--going toe to toe with cancer--and what he talked about was his blessings and how I was doing. Another time we were with him, he ran into an old acquaintance who obviously did not know his medical situation. When he asked how David was doing, he said, "Oh, I got a little thing going on with my head. What about you?" I never once heard him complain about how unfair his situation was. May we all find that place of inner peace to face whatever life throws at us.

So, farewell, Mr. Van Halen. May God bless and keep you always. May your wishes all come true. May you always do for others and let others do for you. You will stay within our hearts, Forever Young. Keep the Band together until we meet again.

Phyllis Gamble (from p. 1)

leave a restaurant while he greeted the twenty people he knew there. Turns out he actually WAS a star, with all the guitars, friends, parties and concert tickets to prove it. And somehow, I felt that I had become one of the cool kids too, just by association.

Dave had a gift for making people feel included that way. People from all walks of life wanted to be around him because he made them feel welcome. He was genuinely kind and generous with his time, talents and resources, and his booming laugh and wicked sense of humor drew people in. If he were reading this right now, he'd say something like, "Man, I'm not all that stuff you said about me." Because he was also the kind of rockstar who never believed his own press. And the kind we're all better for having known.

Thank you for that, Dave. Rest in peace, brother.

Below: "I'm with Dave" crew from Bryant Bank shows their support.

