

Tribute to David Canny and His Belief That We All Should Give Back to Platteville

Those who had the opportunity to be touched by David Canny are certainly mourning the loss of one of Platteville's premier supporters along with Karen and their families. David often mentioned how fortunate, how proud and how much he loved Karen, their children, grandchildren and extended families. He treasured their time past and most recently.

Although I knew David only as my eye doctor for many years, I really got to know David when he called out of the blue one evening and asked that I join the new Platteville Community Arboretum Board of Directors. David was helping start Katie's Garden and forming the Platteville Community Arboretum.

As I would soon learn, David so loved Platteville that he had a long and vast history of helping others improve the quality of life in Platteville. His way was to help others and to do himself. But, most importantly his way was to enable others to see that they not only needed to help others in giving back to Platteville but that they also had a responsibility to do so.

When I signed on to David's PCA board, I only asked one thing of David and that was that I would do no fundraising as I had done too much of that in Jaycee years. A few months later when David had his board in place and Katie's Garden was a reality, it quickly became apparent to David that he needed funding to attain PCA vision. If I might just help him prepare to do that, it would be an immense help and then if I might join him in visiting the first bank or two since my sons' grew up with some of the banks and other business President's children. And so we visited with Bob, Chuck, Rick, Bob, Pat, Doug, Gary, Jo, and others. The vast respect and out pouring of support (financial and otherwise) that these folks had for David and his vision was just phenomenal. They supported a start up environmental service organization because they had seen David help others lead and assist in many others.

The Platteville Community Arboretum (a follow-on to the Friends of Rountree Branch group) has gone on to bring about many of environmental projects (botanical, picnic and community gardens; oak savannah restoration, etc) and been the recipient of gifts, acres of property and thousands of hours of volunteer support. David led and helped bring such talented Directors, Leaders and Volunteers in to enable this to be ongoing. They all make it happen. And Platteville has been the beneficiary of these quality of life improvements.

6 months ago, due to the tougher economic times, David noted our PCA membership was not growing. David calls me and says: 'Gene, we need to do something to change this despite the times and I am going to donate a \$1000 for matching membership funds. What I want you to do is visit with Cindy Tang, Jim Schneller, etc as they will help us.' And as an aside, David says: "Oh be the way, I just found out I have terminal brain cancer – not to worry though, I have had the most wonderful life with Karen, our children and with all the good people of Platteville – no regrets as I am totally at peace with God and life, but we have much to get done and now the time is short." How could I not do this?

In visiting with Jim Schneller about this, Jim shared that “David has done so much and as a result has the ability to suggest we all could be doing a bit more to give back to Platteville without offending – and he is entirely correct”

So if you are inclined to honor David’s memory and the many in our community like David, give back some of your time, talent, and treasure to improve quality in life in Platteville whether it be to PCA, Holiday Project, cub, boy or girl scouts or whatever. Or as Jan and my three sons’ have often said: “We were raised in a little dream world in Platteville – Let’s keep it that way and appreciate it.”

Thank you, David.

Gene Weber