

Community Comment 4/1/2013

By Jon Sapper

Honoring Gene Lucas

We lost a giant in the community last week with the passing of Gene Lucas from Fortuna. There are some people, when at the end of their lives, people say they made a difference in the lives of others. There are some, who people say made a difference in an organization. And then there are some who people say made a difference in their community. Gene made a difference in all three.

He came from the old school, where a look in the eye and a firm handshake was as good as a written contract. Not enough of those folks around anymore. He bemoaned the litigation that is so pervasive in our society today. He was the first "Get er done" guy, long before Larry the Cable Guy coined the phrase. He was an accomplished CPA, a rancher, a very astute businessman, but foremost a family man.

I venture to say that St. Luke's Manor, Fortuna's new Multigenerational Center and the Mel and Grace McLean Foundation would not exist today if it were not for Gene Lucas. He was instrumental in these operations.

This last year when Gene and I were talking, he said, "Jon, I just can't think as good as I used to. I can't remember anything." I replied, "Well, Gene, sounds like you've come down to my level. How does that feel?" "Not very good", he said. We laughed when I said, "I'm not quite sure how to take that".

Over 400 people filled the River Lodge to honor this gentleman. There were stories, laughter, memories and tears. Mike Renner shared a heartfelt poem from an unknown author. In part, he said; Ready or not, some day it will all come to an end. All the things you collected, whether treasured or forgotten, will pass on to others. Your wealth, fame and temporal power will shrivel to irrelevance. Your grudges, resentments, frustrations and jealousies will finally disappear. So, too, will your hopes, ambitions, plans, and to-do lists will expire. It won't matter where you came from or what side of the tracks you lived, whether you were beautiful or brilliant. So, what will matter?

What will matter is not what you bought, but what you built. Not what you got, but what you gave; not your success, but your significance; not what you learned, but what you taught. What will matter is every act of integrity, compassion, courage or sacrifice that enriched, empowered or encouraged others. What will matter is not your competence, but your character. What will matter is not your memories, but the memories that live in those who loved you. Living a life that matters doesn't happen by accident. It's not a matter of circumstance but of choice. Choose to live a life that matters.

Gene Lucas lived a life that mattered.

This has been Jon Sapper for Community Comment.