



SERVE TO CHANGE LIVES

## Meet Our 6940 District Governor!

Dear Rotarians in District 6940,

Let me take this opportunity to share a little bit about who you are getting as a District Governor. I am honored to serve in this role and excited about getting to know more about each of you as well.

I was born in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma and lived my first 18 years there before going to school at St. John's University in Minnesota. I had never experienced wind chills of 60 below before and after receiving my degree in psychology began graduate school at the University of Florida and have been a resident of the state ever since. I have my doctorate in counseling psychology and been a mental health professional for 45 years, the last 30 of which I served as the Director of Psychological Services for the Tallahassee Memorial Behavioral Health Center, 60 bed inpatient psychiatric hospital. I met the love of my life, Vicki in Live Oak where we both began our professional careers after college and met at the county fair while she was checking in 4-H projects and I was arranging a booth on the dangers of drinking and driving for the counseling center. We have been married for 42 years and have two children and three grandchildren.

I have been active in the American Psychological Association and the Florida Psychological Association where I have served as president and received the lifetime achievement award. I am also very active in scouting and an Eagle Scout as is my son and currently a member of the Boy Scouts of America Safe Scouting National Committee and served as a psychologist for three national and one World jamborees.

In addition to serving as president of the Tallahassee Rotary club I received the club service above self-award in 2012. I am extremely active in Rotary youth exchange and have developed the rebound weekend program after outbounds return from a year overseas. I have lectured at four North American Youth Exchange international conferences on best practices in rebound experience and developing resilience.

Because I was looking for other opportunities to give back with the particular skills that I possess, I joined Rotary. Rotary is stronger when we utilize the strengths of each of our members. In that regard one of the components of my service is to Rotarians who we refer to as "under the weather". This may be those who were hospitalized due to cancer, heart attacks, strokes, surgeries, could be in rehab and recovery from those and other conditions as well as those who may be in assisted living and nursing homes for chronic debilitating conditions.

Currently I regularly visit with a former president of our club who is in a local assisted living as well as a member who has bone marrow cancer from which he will not recover. However, probably the most significant and humbling opportunity I had was when the son of a fellow Rotarian had a stroke while driving on the interstate, went off the road and struck a tree and immediately went into a coma from which he never recovered. I went to the neuro intensive care unit to see him and obviously was not able to communicate with him at all. However, his mother was present. I cannot begin to imagine the pain a parent must feel when their child is lying there helpless, and they are not able to communicate with them in any meaningful way or help them. As parents we always assume that we will die before our children and when that is reversed it throws our world into a turmoil. It is so hard to know what to say at times like that and sometimes the best thing is just to be there with a shoulder, a pat on the shoulder or hug.

I went back many times to see this young man but again, he never regained consciousness. The mother was always there. I spent my time ministering to her as best I could. He was later transferred to a rehabilitation center where his condition continued to deteriorate. Still, his mother was always at his side as was his father when he could be there. Eventually, it got to the point where it was obvious, he would never recover, and the extraordinary efforts made to prolong his life had reached a point where the family had to make the very difficult decision of whether or not to pull the plug. Again, I cannot imagine the strain on a parent to make such a gigantic decision on behalf of their blessed child. They made the decision to end his life and specifically asked me to be there when that occurred. I was truly humbled with that as I had never been there for the death of someone before and it was a very challenging time. However, I had to be there on behalf of the parents. They had thought and prayed about that decision and made it without further hesitation. When the end came it was very peaceful.

Since that time their son has been honored by his colleagues in many ways and again, they invited me to be able to participate in that. I was honored and privileged to do so and to continue to offer support for them. While it has been many years obviously the grieving process has no specific timetable. They obviously take each day at a time, and I continue to try to be there for them as much as possible.

It is truly an honor and privilege to be a Rotarian and to serve others in a manner to change lives in all the various ways we can. I challenge each of you to find the best use of your talents to change the lives of those we serve.

Larry Kubiak, District Governor