

Bob McKenzie Leads the Rotary Club of Tulsa

BY D. FORREST CAMERON, GASSERONLINE CHAIRMAN



Robert L. McKenzie believes in service above self, a philosophy he has used throughout his career in both business and in helping others, especially through his involvement with the Rotary Club of Tulsa.

McKenzie's service has reached an apex this year, as he has assumed the presidency of his Rotary Club, which, at nearly 500 members, is consistently one of the largest Rotary clubs in the world in membership. His presidency runs from July 1 of this year until June 30, 2011, when Phil Lakin will become president.

McKenzie was born in Fayetteville, N.C., and raised in Havelock, N.C. in a Marine family. He says Havelock, a city of 22,000, was a great town in which to be raised. It is the home of Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point, the 2nd Marine Aircraft Wing and the Fleet Readiness Center - East.

Located in Eastern North Carolina, midway between historic New Bern and the beautiful beaches of the Crystal Coast, McKenzie says Havelock has much to offer residents and visitors alike. The city is a great place to live or visit, blending old-fashioned Southern hospitality with a cultural diversity.

McKenzie proudly says his hometown is named after the 19th century British General Henry Havelock, a man of high moral character. McKenzie's ties are still close to Havelock, as his mother still lives there.

In his first jobs in his hometown, McKenzie says he cut grass and delivered newspapers. He later landed a position with a Kentucky Fried Chicken franchise, which started his career in the food and beverage industry.

McKenzie says that when he was starting his career in Havelock, he worked on the Marine Corps Air Base in food service, and the director "took a liking" to him. His mentor called one day and gave McKenzie what would become excellent opportunities in food and beverage management positions, which would lead him eventually to cities such as Baltimore, Cincinnati, Greensboro, N.C. and Birmingham, Ala.

McKenzie moved to Tulsa in the 1980s to continue his career in the food management business. In 1995 he purchased a Cici's Pizza franchise, opening the store at 4949 S. Peoria Ave. The restaurant is highly successful and receives excellent reviews.

McKenzie says that over the past seven years his store is among the top 10 among approximately 650 Cici's Pizza stores. His emphasis is on customer service and also employee relations. He says groups come from all over the state and region to visit the store, including many athletic teams.

The business is operated under the name Lyon Enterprises. Lyon is his mother's maiden name, and also McKenzie's middle name.

McKenzie says he was invited to attend his first Rotary Club of Tulsa meeting in 1994 by Joe Mobley, the father of Martha Mitchell, the executive director of the Little Light House.

McKenzie's leadership in the club includes being a Club Foundation Fellow, a Medical Supplies Network Ambassador, a Paul Harris Fellow, and he was the Rotarian of the Year in 2006.

"The Rotary Club of Tulsa does so much for the community through its programs such as Adopt-a-School, Shop with a Cop, Above and Beyond, Camp Enterprise, the Centennial Project, Crescendo Music Awards, Henry P. Iba Awards, Own a Water Well for Nicaragua, and district programs such as the Medical Supplies Network. There are enough avenues in Rotary to touch people," he says. "The programs we have for the community are countless. These are all important to the community. We also have interesting and important speakers in our weekly meetings."

McKenzie says that during his presidency, he would like the club to focus on building membership and starting a Rotaract Club. "We want to model our Rotaract Club after the Birmingham, Alabama club that has over 200 Rotaract members."

Rotaract is a Rotary-sponsored service club for young men and women. Rotaract clubs are either community or university based, and they are sponsored by a local Rotary club. This makes them true "partners in service" and key members of the family of Rotary. As one of Rotary's most significant and fastest-growing service programs, with more than 7,000 clubs in about 163 countries and geographical areas, Rotaract has become a worldwide phenomenon.

McKenzie married Darlene August 3, 1974, and they have two daughters. Charity McKenzie is an attorney in the Washington, D.C. area. Faith Blackwood is a homemaker in Tucson, Ariz. with four children. Her husband Phil is the Technical Director for the University of Arizona.

The Tulsa area is fortunate to have so many civic leaders working hard for the betterment of the community. Bob McKenzie is at the forefront in bringing enthusiasm and getting people involved for a positive future for his civic club as well as for the entire

community.

To learn more about the Rotary Club of Tulsa, including membership information, please see www.TulsaRotary.com.