

# Ed-shaped Cookies and a Surprise Party for Diablo Foods Patriarch

By Lee Borrowman



Ed Stokes at his Rotary Birthday Party

Photo John Sherry

If you happened to be shopping at Diablo Foods a couple of weeks ago, you may have enjoyed nibbling a cookie baked in the shape of a smiling Ed Stokes with your cup of coffee as you perused the new self-serve deli and fresh sushi-to-go. Stokes, the owner of Diablo Foods and Honorary Mayor of Lafayette, turned eighty-five years old this month and the community did not let the milestone go by unnoticed or uncelebrated.

The Lafayette Rotary Club honored Stokes, a long-time Rotarian, at their weekly luncheon meeting on November 15 at the Oakwood Athletic Club. Speakers included Sheriff Warren Rupf, former Mayors Jay Strauss and Erling Horn, Rotary President Larry

Duson, Oakwood's Dennis Garrison and Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Jay Lifson, who led the room in a sing-along of the "Mr. Ed" theme song. Lifson said, "Ed, you have been our example of 'lead by example.' We learn from your warmth and generosity and your devotion and love to your family, your employees and your community."

The perennially busy Stokes can still frequently be found at Diablo Foods, or perhaps occasionally chatting with friends on the new bench that Lafayette Rotary installed in his honor last March, just outside the doors to the store, under the tree.

## Happy Birthday, Ed Stokes!

Speaking at the Rotary event celebrating the 85th birthday of Ed Stokes, Lafayette City Manager Steve Falk, after opening with an anecdote about Stokes' legendary generosity, said:

"What would happen if you never said no to people who asked you for something?

What would happen if you always had a good thing to say about somebody else?

What would happen if you saw the sun every day, even when it was raining?

What would happen if you were unfailingly generous with your time and resources?

What would happen if you had a smile on your face for everyone you saw?

What would happen if you weren't afraid to tell people that you loved them?

Here's what would happen.

You'd live to be 85 years old.

People would throw surprise parties for you.

Everyone would smile back at you.

Your business would flourish for decades even though you continued to give and give and give with no expectation of return.

You would set an example that other merchants would step up to meet.

You'd be named the Businessperson of the Year and the Citizen of the Year, and you'd win every conceivable award possible from local groups and service clubs.

You'd be coronated as the Honorary Mayor – the only person in the history of the City to have that honor.

Finally, you would, through your love and generosity, establish a tone for one community – **this** community, **our** community – that would ultimately transform it. Transform it into one of the finest, most livable, lovable, and generous places imaginable.

That's the power of one person. That's the power of Ed Stokes."

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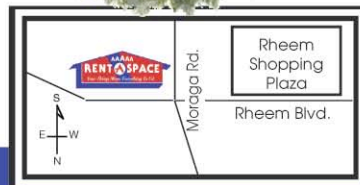
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