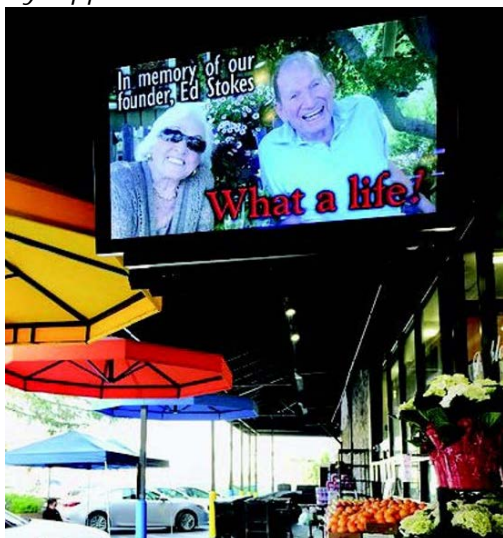


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Lafayette loses longtime resident, 'honorary mayor'

By Pippa Fisher



Diablo Foods paid tribute to its founder, Ed Stokes, on the day that he passed away with a photo at the entrance of the store. Photo Jeff Heyman, City of Lafayette

the Year." Diablo Foods was voted the number one specialty food store in Contra Costa County by Diablo Magazine in 2011, and the California Independent Grocery Association recognized Stokes and Diablo Foods as the "Best Independent Grocer" in 2011.

Additionally Stokes was named Lafayette's "Citizen of the Year" and 2012 "Distinguished Citizen of the Year" as well as having been the only two-time Lafayette "Business Person of the year" recipient.

He received the Su Stauffer Acalanes Friend of Education Award, a Marine Corps League Award, the Humanitarian Award by the Soroptimist Club, and the Paul Harris Fellow Award from Lafayette Rotary.

Stokes served as president of Lafayette's Chamber of Commerce, Rotary Club and Town Hall Theatre as well as having been a director of numerous other community organizations. He was generous in his support of Lafayette schools and local charities.

He continued to be a presence in the store throughout his life, always checking to make sure colleagues, friends and customers were cared for.

Lafayette City Manager Steve Falk said, "Ed's passing makes me sad, but also grateful that I was able to spin in Ed's orbit for a couple of decades. His unbounded generosity served as an example for us all, and I am a better person because I had the great gift of knowing Ed Stokes."

Founder of Lafayette's Diablo Foods Ed Stokes passed away peacefully Nov. 28 amidst family and friends.

Stokes was known as honorary mayor of the city because of his philanthropy.

"Ed personified the best of Lafayette. His generosity, friendliness, ability to seemingly be everywhere, and business practices set a standard we should all try to emulate," said Lafayette Mayor Don Tatzin, adding "I had the privilege of serving as mayor while recognizing Ed was the true mayor of our community."

Stokes founded Lafayette-based Diablo Foods, which is still family-owned and operated, 50 years ago. For two years he worked 12-hour days with his wife Betty behind the deli counter. Three generations of the family adhere to Stokes' principles: best quality, full friendly service, excellent selection, utmost cleanliness and always fair prices. Over time he opened another store in Danville and two more in Concord.

Ed served for 12 years on the board of the Northern California Grocers Association. In 2010, the California Independent Grocers Association named him "Retailer of

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[back](#)

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