

Kerrville Area Business Magazine
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“A retrospective: Celebrating 40 years of living in the Kerrville/Kerr County community”

In last month's article I shared with you that your community friend was celebrating his 40th year of living in the Kerrville/Kerr County community. The actual date for moving to Kerrville with my family was on August 2, 1970. The past forty years has gone by very quickly! Last month, I reminisced over some of the events I remembered through the 1970-1990's. This month's article will focus on the past twenty years of living here in this community.

During the 1990's our community began to see several new developments in business and residential projects that would greatly impact our community. The planning and development of Comanche Trace, the expansion and renovations of HEB, Luby's and the building of a new Wal-Mart site name just a few. In 1994, I had an awesome opportunity that many of you have also experienced in starting my own business. After 13 years of learning the funeral business trade from some wonderful mentors, I set out on my own to experience the challenges of operating a small business. My family and I were very blessed with our business from 1994-2003, offering funeral service in our community. The business experience was very valuable learning experience: managing a budget for daily operations, paying taxes, salaries, insurance, loan payments and all of the other expenditures a business will occur. That experience helped me to understand that, although extremely rewarding, operating a small business is also extremely challenging and it is so important for our government and local community to support and help small business grow and thrive. I wouldn't trade the experience of owning a small business in Kerrville for anything!

Remember Y2K?? All of us business owners at the time anticipated a technology meltdown on December 31, 1999. We were warned that our computers, electricity and other services would be at risk. I was one of those over-prepared business owners who purchased multiple electrical generators, equipment and supplies, being overly cautious and worried about what could possibly happen to my business operation. I am very glad that this experience was a lot of hype and didn't materialize into what several forecasters predicted. I eventually recouped most of my dollars back from Y2K purchases. Do you have similar story?

Another date that all Americans will remember and wish had never happened was September 11, 2001. My day started early in the office preparing for funeral services. I remember being absolutely shocked and stunned by the events we watched on TV on that very difficult day. After the events of September 11th and the days that followed, I remember attending multiple prayer services with packed audiences in different church denominations all across our community. Our community really came together to pray for our country and support each other during those very difficult days. I also remember our churches being filled to capacity for several months after that event. It's sad that it had to be such a tragic event to be the catalyst to fill our churches. I hope and pray that, in the future, our country will focus on what made our nation so great.

Other significant developments in the first decade of the 2000s would include seeing the growth of Schreiner University, a new Peterson Regional Medical Center (Kerrville's largest economic project ever), over 50 million dollars of TxDOT projects, including projects on Sidney Baker, Broadway, Spur 98 Bridge, Holdsworth Drive, Francisco Lemos Bridge and many others. Other larger business developments included Lowe's and Home Depot. We can expect our 2000 census population of 20,425 (City of Kerrville) and 47,600 (Kerr County) to increase significantly due to the improving quality of life we enjoy in this hill country community.

Some fun reflections and memories over the last 20 years:

Did you know that the Kerrville community hosted several San Antonio Spurs preseason and playoff camps at Schreiner University from 1994-1999? As a longtime Spur fan and season ticketholder with the team, I would write a letter every year starting all the way back in 1980 with the suggestion that the Spurs hold their camps in the Kerrville community free from the distractions that impact the NBA world. In August of 1994 my persistence paid off as I received a call from the newly appointed General Manager of the Spurs. Gregg Popovich agreed to spend the day with me in Kerrville to see what our community could offer the team. Other guests included R.C. Buford and other coaching staff. After a long day of visits and touring our community, as we were wrapping up the day driving down Main Street, we got behind one of our cherished and respected citizens who was taking two lanes going to the grocery store going 15 mph. As we followed the car in front of us, Pop turned to me and said, "We're coming to Kerrville for camp." The great quality of life that our community enjoys was a real selling point to Spurs management as a place for their team to prepare for the NBA season. Players who visited and stayed in the Kerrville camps included David "The Admiral" Robinson, Avery Johnson, Chuck Person, Glenn "Doc" Rivers, the unforgettable Dennis Rodman and today's cornerstone Tim Duncan. The first week of Duncan's NBA career began at Schreiner University. I remember watching Spurs owner, Peter Holt, grin from ear to ear watching Robinson and Duncan on the court at the same time. The Spurs eventually stopped coming to the Kerrville area in 2000 after they built a six million dollar practice facility in San Antonio. I like to think that the Kerrville community played a small part in developing team chemistry in those days that would eventually led to four NBA Championships. Not enough time to talk about all the stories that happened over those training camp days in Kerrville, maybe another day.....

Thank you for letting me share and reflect on some of the memories of living in the Kerrville/Kerr County community. Kerrville is a great place to live, work; raise family, meet new friends and most of all enjoy the God-given beauty of the Texas Hill Country. Until then.....