

PDG Mel Tryon

1947 - 2022

Have you seen the TV Insurance advertisement about the State Farm Insurance agent who is truly altruistic? Have you wondered where they found an agent to model the behavior of a man who truly cares about his clients?

You need have looked no further than Signal Mountain, where **Mel Tryon** had a storefront insurance agency for the Farmers Insurance Group, and several others, for more than 20 years.

Mel was not just a caring insurance agent on Signal, he was the heart and soul of the Signal Mountains Lions Club, and his contributions to the club in the last two decades are legendary. He was a credit to his profession, his community and his friends.

I hope this article helps you appreciate what a special man was Mel Tryon, and appreciate him the way his friends did.

Mel was born in Buffalo, NY in 1947. He was an unusually industrious young man; had a paper route when he was 12, and went to work in a grocery store when he was 16. By the time he joined the Army in 1968, he had been employed more than a third of his young life.

In the Army, he met and married his wife **Nancy (nee O' Connell)** in 1970, and after leaving the service, he attended the State University of NY at Brockport. During his first years of school, he worked part time and Nancy worked full time at the Rochester NY Association for Retarded Children. He graduated Magna Cum Laude in 1973, and that same year his first son was born. A pattern was established.

For the next 13 years, he worked for the Travelers Insurance Company in several different locations. During those years, another son and daughter were added to the family unit. He was becoming a force in the Insurance business. His profession enabled him to travel and meet agents in small towns across the states of Utah, Montana and Idaho. He was transferred to Hartford, CT, Travelers Home Office, to lead a new personal computer-based production process. While there, he traveled throughout the United States introducing and training Traveler's staff and agents. However, the relocations and travel were challenging the Tryon's to settle down.

In 1989, he accepted a Vice-President position with Provident General Insurance Company and Nancy and their children moved to Signal Mountain. In 1992, when Provident General was sold, Mel and Nancy started the Signal Mountain Insurance Agency, as a representative of the Farmers Insurance Group and several other Insurance companies. His leadership roles in the Tennessee Insurance Community included serving as President of the Society of Property

Casualty Underwriters and President of the National Association of Insurance and Financial Advisors.

During his years with the Agency, he coached youth baseball, softball, basketball and soccer. He served on the Board of Directors of SM Baseball and the Hamilton Futbol Club youth soccer league; served as League Coordinator for SM Youth Basketball and one year as Dixie Youth Baseball tournament chairperson.

He was also team manager of his daughters' traveling soccer team which took them throughout Tennessee, Georgia and Virginia for tournaments. For nine years he organized and coached the annual Red Bank Girls Alumnae soccer game. It is fair to say he was a full-time dad.

In February 2000, he became a member of the SM Lions Club giving him another fulfilling way to help those in need. In the Lions club, he served as a Tail Twister, Membership Chairperson, three years of Vice Presidency, Club President 2005-2006 and member of the Board of Directors, 2001-20014. In addition to service on numerous committees. he assisted in the formation and development of the LEO Clubs at SMMHS and McCallie School in Chattanooga.

He was on the team that formed new Lions Clubs at Ooltewah/Collegedale, Whitwell/Crossroads, Tellico Plains, Virginia College, Spring City and Meigs County. He served as the District 12-O Club Excellence Process Leader and was the process leader in the Signal Mountain and Athens Lions Clubs; an excellent renewal for Lions Clubs in the early part of this century.

For six years he served as Leadership Development Chairperson responsible for training new club officers throughout the District. In 2014, he became the District Governor in District 12-O. He continued to be involved in training club officers at the District and State level, supporting Lion initiatives in all facets of the Lions programs. To fill in his spare time, he volunteered at the Bachman Community Center teaching Beginner and Intermediate Bridge Courses for 2 hours every Monday night for 10 years

In 2014, he encountered a new challenge, a Lung infection of unknown origin. His friends watched him struggle with his Oxygen Tank as he continued to perform widespread duties with the Lions Club, and his perseverance over the past decade was truly amazing.

It was an honor to be among his friends!

George Davenport