



How I Got Where I'm At – Business Owner Edition

Colleen Brannan, Howard Hoyle, Jr., John zumBrunnen

Elly Clary introduced our three speakers for today's business owner edition of How I Got Where I'm At. They did not disappoint, each sharing key elements of their success and, not surprisingly, similar, if not identical, underlying themes.



Colleen Brannan shared her journey, starting with the early years of her life: born into an Irish Catholic family, the youngest of three girls, in Washington State to a career Navy dad and pediatric nurse mom. Her parents met in a bar in San Francisco and married six weeks later. After 54 years, they are still going strong. Colleen Cotter, as she was known back then, was named after her father's sister, a nun who ran off with and married a priest.

(You really can't make this stuff up!) Colleen's family moved around a lot, until her Dad retired from the Navy. She spent her middle and high school years in Springfield, VA. She is a University of South Carolina graduate (after choosing not to follow her two sisters to Virginia Tech) with a degree in Journalism. Her first job out of college was with Ketchum, a global PR firm, in Washington DC. She transferred to their Atlanta office to work on the 1996 Olympics, worked corporately at MCI and Cox, got married and had two children. After a short stint in Winston Salem at Mullen Advertising, she moved to Charlotte and became the head of PR at Luquire George Andrews. She realized that working at an advertising agency that also did PR vs. a true PR firm was not what she wanted to do so she launched BRANSTORM PR in 2006. She credits many people in our club with the success of her firm: Katie Tyler, Marilynn Bowler, Karen Price and Wes Jones, to name a few. She differentiates her firm and herself by highlighting her 25 years of experience as a public relations professional with deep ties to the community. That combined with her willingness to work hard and deliver exceptional service to every client is a winning combination.



Howard Hoyle, Jr., a Charlotte native, the only son of his parents' four children, both restaurateurs. As a family, they were regular churchgoers and they loved sports. Howard graduated from South Mecklenburg High School and opted to forego pursuing a traditional college degree in favor of going into business with his dad. He built his business, HHJ Construction, based on a few basic principles he learned while working with his father, also a small business owner. Howard has never looked back,

although he has since pursued formal education by taking business courses at CPCC. His dad taught him many things that have stuck with him and guided his path. "You have to own it to run it." "Hire integrity, not talent" (You can teach talent but integrity is innate.) "Hire workers, not thinkers." (Thinkers cost money, workers get the job done.) He learned

a few other things along the way, as he built his janitorial services and construction business: Take care of your clients' needs and make them feel indebted to you for your good work and service; stay ahead of schedule; exceed expectations. Build lasting relationships based on trust. These basic tenets combined with a lot of determination and hard work have all contributed to Howard's success.



John zumBrunnen comes from a long line of farmers. Originally from North Dakota where his grandparents, Swedish immigrants, farmed Homestead Act lands in the Badlands area of the Dakotas. A brutal but beautiful landscape, his family depended on their church community, their friends and their neighbors. John is the fifth of six children, all of whom were encouraged to pursue the formal education that their parents never had.

John's entrée was earning first place in the National Science Fair which resulted in a full scholarship to college. He earned a degree in mechanical engineering and made his way to Georgia in 1972, where he began to appreciate and embrace a kinder, gentler life in the South.

After a variety of jobs in his chosen field, John decided to form his own consulting business in 1989, zumBrunnen, Inc., a consulting service helping contractors complete their projects on time, on budget and in compliance with governmental restrictions and requirements. In 2006 he moved his family and business to Charlotte to be closer to his wife's parents. John attributes his business success to a few core principles, most of which are contained in our own Rotary Four-Way Test: act with integrity, demand accountability and always do the right thing.

The common themes—integrity, hard work, relationships, accountability—are evident in the successful business endeavors of our speakers today. A good reminder for all of us!

Speaker Write-Up: Suzanne Bledsoe; *Head Table:* Howard Hoyle, Jr., Katie Tyler, Colleen Brannan, Elly Clary, John zumBrunnen; *Invocation:* Elizabeth Teagarden; *Visitors & Guests:* Luther Moore; *Photos:* Bert Voswinkel; *Piano:* Em Syrewicze

CLUB NEWS

Foundation chair **Karen Calder** provided an update on one of The Rotary Foundation's six areas of focus, which is education and recognized the following for their support to the organization. *Level 2* **Ed Driggs**; *Level 3* **Paul Wyche**, **Julie Haack**, **Biff Virkler**; *Level 5* **Erskine Harkey**; *Level 6* **Brian Gibson**; *Level 7* **Jerry Coughter & Henry Bostic**.

Quinton and **Jenn Snyder Gibson** are experiencing a very sad couple weeks. Jenn's mother has been quite ill and her father, Charlie Snyder, passed away April 9 following a very fast decline in health. Funeral services will be held April 20 in Canton, Ohio. Several have asked for Jenn's address: 15417 Abbots Bridge Road, Charlotte, NC 28277.

Sympathy is also extended to Maude and **Henry Cantrell**. Maude's brother, Frank Patton of Morganton, NC passed away last week.

Elizabeth Teagarden and her husband Scott Anderson, and Sandra and **Luther Moore** attended the annual peace conference in Chapel Hill over this past weekend.

Barbara and **Graham Wilson** celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on April 6, 2018. Congratulations!

Bryan Adams has asked if there are club members whose business has a need for a college student to hire over the summer. That question could apply to others in the club and if you have a suggestion or can help out in any way, let Bryan (bryan.adams@vradlaw.com) or Sandy (sandy@charlotterotary.org) know.

DISTRICT CONFERENCE: Rotary Districts 7680 and 7750 are teaming up to host a joint conference May 18-20, 2018 in Charleston. The conference will be held at the Charleston Convention Center with hotel accommodations at Embassy Suites by Hilton. Scheduled to speak: Immediate Past RI President John Germ and RI Director-Elect David Stovall will talk about how Rotary is making a difference throughout the world. SC Attorney General Alan Wilson will speak about human trafficking. And, business consultant Peter Chatel will talk about leadership. 202 Rotarians have already signed up to attend. Conference registration is \$150; hotel is \$170 per night and sign up is available on the database (DACdb.com). This conference is open to everyone.

MEMBERSHIP

07/01/2017 309

04/10/2018 292

Net Increase: -17

New Members: Brian Carn, Christy Majors

Resignations: Steve Byrum, Susan Evans

Visitors 16

Club Members 127

Total 143(50.0%)

Visitors & Guests: Victoria Chapra, Denise Hallett, Linwood Bolles, Susan zumBrunnen, Jack zumBrunnen, Liz Hilliard, Melinda Armstrong, Vojtech Ptak, Alex Bogojevich, Oscar Groomes, Sandy Carlson, Chad Pearson, Ella Hoyle, Howard Hoyle, III, Mary Hoyle, Howard Hoyle, Sr.

UPCOMING BIRTHDAYS (04/19/18 – 04/25/18)

04/22 JT Simpson

04/24 Jim Haney

04/25 Catherine Horne, Em Syrewicze

UPCOMING ANNIVERSARIES (04/19/18 – 04/25/18)

04/22 Janice & Robert Salmon

04/24 Dianne & Jesse Hite, Courtney & Ycaza Fernando

ROTARY ANNIVERSARIES (04/19/18 – 04/25/18)

2 years – Gayle Sims

3 years – Carolyn Carlburg

4 years – Patricia Shafer

6 years – Boyd Coggins

8 years – Quincy Foil White

9 years – Dumont Clarke

UPCOMING PROGRAMS

04/17 Rhett Mabry, Duke Endowment

04/24 Chef Alyssa Gorelick, Chef Alyssa's Kitché

05/01 Dr. Clayton Wilcox, Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools

05/08 Tai Jaiyeoba, City of Charlotte Planning Director

Photos from our luncheons and other events can be found on [Flickr](#) [Click here](#)





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Charlotte



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