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## Interview with Dave Pressler

Chris Meyers

David Pressler

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Event: Interview with Dave Pressler  
Place: His home, Mt. Vernon.

CM: This is Chris Meyers interviewing Dr. David Pressler, the president of the Mt. Vernon Kiwanis Club, the date is February 11<sup>th</sup>, time is 4pm, and we are at his house.

DP: Hi Chris...  
(laughter)

CM: If we could start off by just having you talk a little bit about your involvement with the Kiwanis Club and the history of that.

DP: I'm presently the president of the Kiwanis Club, it's a one year term. It starts in the Fall in October and runs through October. Um...Before that, there's a series of...I've been a chair of a committee a couple of times and there's elections and you're on the board of directors, and then you move into a presidential seat, and that's president, VP, etc. I joined the club in a approximately 1984, 85, so I've been a member 16 of 17 years.

CM: What are your presidential duties...is it mainly a formality or...?

DP: No...I thought maybe it was, but I found out that it really isn't. Um...it's, you know, part of it is trying to make sure that the club runs smoothly. There's a lot of things that go on, that you don't think about, that if someone doesn't do it, things get all balled up and the right hand doesn't know what the left hand's doing...part of my job is to act as a conduit between different groups in the club. Ah...I run the noon meetings, also run the board of directors meetings once a month, um...it's my job to sort of be in charge of projects...I'm a general overseer. It's nice to delegate, and I try to delegate everything I possibly can. Um...but, ah....

CM: Could you tell me a little bit about the types of events that Kiwanis puts on, and kind of what Kiwanis is all about?

DP: Our focus is service for youth. And um...sort of goes up through college age. Primary focus is on children 5 and under, but that's sort of more official than anything else. The activities are for all ages, and also community services and other things that aren't necessarily children focused. Um...we have different projects of ah...recycling if you will, winter coats, boots, things like that for kids in the fall when it starts to get cold. Um...do a lot of sponsorship – monetary donations for clubs and groups to help'm sort of catch those things they can't get done themselves. Oh...we ring the salvation army buckets, ah...we've had programs in the schools...for...incentive programs for bringing up grades. And programs in the schools for...I'm blanking on the name of it, but the idea was for...about being a good citizen, if you will...personally...those types of things. Um...we have different things – we have roadside cleanups, hazardous waste drop-off days, um...do a fair amount of things with head start. We've built playgrounds before. Um...we've worked over at the career center helping with a children's garden that they

put up over there. It runs the whole gamete of different things. Our main fundraisers...we have two main areas that we gain our funds from. One is a, we have a chicken barbecue at the Dan Emmett Festival in August every year. It used to be its own free standing event, but then we moved it in with the festival, and that's ah, we cook...eh...I don't know, maybe 1400 chicken halves and then sell em, and that's where most of our funds come from. And the other part of our funds come from...we staff the concession stands at Kenyon sporting events – football games and men and women's basketball games.

CM: Well it sounds like there is a connection with food in both of them...

DP: Since you say that, yes (laughing).

CM: Maybe you could tell me a little bit about, either the connection with Kiwanis and food, or why food might be the center for social events in Knox County.

DP: Ah...I think foods, first of food's just fun...a good thing for fundraisers, because people know they're going to eat, and they know they have to eat. So first of all, it's not hard to get people to spend money, so to speak, on food. And serving the food is particularly labor intensive, and we have a group of members, so we can supply the labor. Um...People like to get together and eat at the barbecue...we have different ways...it's possible to come pick up the chicken and take it home, but we also have an eating area there at the festival. And we always did before. And I think people do like to come and see other folks.

CM: So it's kind of like a social event...

DP: I think so...I mean...and even for the members, it's even a social event, if you will, um...maybe they're working, but you're working with some other folks that maybe you don't get to see as much, and socialize with other members and the people that are coming through to get the food. Sorta neat to see a lot of people you know.

CM: And do you think you see that in Knox County in general...not just that at this one event, but at social events in general, does food seem to be the center of...

DP: I wouldn't say that it always is, but a lot of fundraisers are food oriented...different things. Like they just had the raccoon dinner out there in Danville. Now how many raccoon dinners have you been to? I've never been...I'm not saying I wouldn't go...I'm not sure about eating raccoon, but certainly that's a different thing. At the Dan Emmett Days, the exchange club has a pork chop supper, and I think Rotary sells chicken. I mean all of em have some of their major fundraisers during that period of time. Kiwanis club's...well we don't do it here – we have before, but we really don't...it's not a regular thing – lot's of Kiwanis clubs have pancake breakfasts. It seems to be a major fun thing for most Kiwanis clubs is making pancakes and having a big breakfast. Where I grew up the Kiwanis club had a big pancake breakfast. The Kiwanis clubs are service oriented, but they're also social clubs for the members, and...

CM: Oh, definitely, and the Kiwanis definitely seems to have a connection with the Alcove downtown...

DP: We've been at the Alcove...I really don't know how long. I mean it was...I'm guessing 30 years or more...it's a guess. If you want to use that number, you'll probably have to call the Alcove. The Alcove could probably tell you...how long. Um, the connection really why the Alcove is it's central, downtown, which for a lot of folks mean they work downtown and walk there, and that's...well we do meet at lunch. Um, it serves a couple of purposes. We all sort of need to eat lunch, so it gives you a chance to eat lunch. Um, the Alcove also, the reason it's there, it because they have the only room large enough to seat us all in the right configuration, you know. While we've never considered...well it's always been a lunch meeting and I think that's the way it will stay, the connection with the Alcove is more one of convenience. I mean they have a good location and they can seat us, but um...that's about it. We talked about having a satellite club...starting a new club a few years ago, and it just sorta didn't happen. We decided not to. But you know we were looking at new clubs and it was going to be probably a breakfast club. It was going to be a different meal, but...really I think all Kiwanis clubs everywhere their events, their weekly meetings center around some sort of meal, whether it's breakfast, noon, or dinner.

CM: And at the meetings themselves, are people pretty much eating throughout, or...?

DP: There's an eating period, generally the first 20 minutes or so where you're eating and talking with whoever you've sat down next. I mean it is social...nobody tells you where you have to sit. So you can sit with whoever you want and there's certainly tables of people that the same people sit next to each other week after week after week. I think that if one of them died, they'd bring their corpse and set it there to keep the chair full so they wouldn't have to sit with anybody new. But, ah, you know – they've been friends and they've sat together for all that time – for years and years, so it's a chance they get to sit down and talk. People to eat that come in late...there's no problem...keep eatin. But it certainly has a period of time when we try to get most of the eating done.

CM: So you see the food as the social aspect?

DP: Yeah...it serves a purpose because we need to eat. And there are members who come in who don't eat. You'll probably seen ten members who'll come in who'll be there who won't have lunch for one reason or another. But, will come to the meeting. And they sort of sit off to the corner. Um, and those folks sort of socialize amongst themselves then, because they're not sitting at a table. But it serves a dual purpose, you have to eat, but at the same time, then, you can socialize. For someone like myself, I pretty much work by myself...I mean I have employees and patients and things, but I don't have any real co-workers, if you will. Going to lunch is a good thing. I get to see other folks and talk, and I don't have to...I don't know, but it certainly serves a social purpose for some people more than others, I think. It depends where you work. If you work with a lot of people at the same place it might not be such a social thing, but if you

tend to work by yourself, possibly if you were an attorney, dentist, different occupations – psychologist...something where you were by yourself a lot, it would probably be more of a social outlet for us than the others.

CM: Well thank you very much...is there anything else that you'd like to add about either Kiwanis in general or Kiwanis and any other relationships with food that they have that you can think of? Or with any restaurants?

DP: No...can't think of anything...

CM: Great...well thanks again, I guess we'll end there.