

# GER Ron and First Lady Nancy Hicks' Visit to Tennessee

We flew out of Byrd Airport in Richmond, Virginia, at 9:00 am, on a cool, rainy, and breezy Sunday, April 7, headed for Gatlinburg, Tennessee, by way of Charlotte and Knoxville airports. We were met at the McGhee Tyson Airport in Knoxville by



Out-Going State President Joe Evans, Carolyn Fulghum, Nancy, and Ron

PGER and State Sponsor Jack Frost and his wife Sharon, State President Joe Evans and his friend Carolyn Fulghum, State Secretary



Ron and Nancy with State Sponsor Jack Frost and wife Sharon

Ronnie Attkisson and Jane, and PSP Randy Shook and Wanda. On the way to Gatlinburg, we stopped for lunch, then passed through the congested "Dollywood Park" area, before arriving at the Edgewood Hotel and Conference Center, site of the Tennessee Elks Association State Convention about 3:30 pm.

At 4:00 pm, Ron attended the Planning Committee meeting, chaired by Bill Ringger, who had replaced Ron as the Area Three Member of the Committee On Judiciary and now serves as a Justice on the Grand Forum.



Exalted Ruler of the Gatlinburg Lodge John Lankford and Ron

Thursday night dinner was at the Gatlinburg Lodge with the meal prepared by members of the Chattanooga Lodge. Exalted Ruler John Lankford gave Ron a tour of the two-story building, with the Lodge located on the second floor above several commercial spaces, which the Lodge leases to commercial tenants.



Ron and Nancy with Member of the Grand Forum Bill Ringger and wife Sue

The Friday morning Past State Presidents Breakfast at 6:45 am was followed by meetings of the TEA Elks Advisory, and the Board of Directors of the Benevolent Trust and the Charitable Trust Boards. The State Major Project provides Nursing and Trade (vocational) Scholarships to high school seniors and non-traditional applicants. The TEA also offers State Grants to Lodges for their community projects and this year every Lodge received a State Grant. Ron and Jack joined a conference call with other Grand Lodge Officials at 11:30 am, then visited a couple of Hospitality Rooms for lunch, "grazing" on many homemade creations (food and beverage).

Sharon Frost and Nancy, the State Officers Wives, and Past State Presidents Wives met in a Hospitality Room for coffee and some light breakfast treats. The ladies presented Nancy with gifts representing many areas of Tennessee. Nancy was quite surprised, but enjoyed hearing about each gift and the area it represented. Several of the items were hand made by Tennessee Elk wives.

For lunch (the ladies do like to eat and shop) we walked over to the main street of Gatlinburg and had lunch at the Pancake Pantry. We were missing the lively conversation of Betsy Callicott as she and Ted were unable to attend the TEA Convention. After lunch we did a little "looking" in some of the stores before returning to the hotel.

The first TEA Business Session started at 2:00 pm with Reports of the State Officers, followed by many good Committee Reports and the



Tennessee "Share the Pride Committee"

election of the new Association and Corporate Officers. Tennessee is very close to a Membership Gain this year with twenty Lodges projected for a gain; the State achieved the GER

Goal for ENF with Johnson City leading the way (\$12.79); last year, twenty-one Lodges received ENF Community Grants, led by Johnson

City and Elizabethton with four each; and so far this year, five Lodges have received three Grants each: Johnson City, Oak Ridge, Camden, Lawrenceburg and Madison. Tennessee reported the value of their services to their Communities this year at \$2.7M.

The Benevolent Night Dinner was held Friday evening and Abbey Evans, sponsored by the Memphis Lodge, was announced as the winner of the top Nursing Scholarship. Abbey will be attending University of Tennessee Chattanooga in the fall. Tennessee has a State Per Capita Goal of \$3.05 to help in the support of the Scholarship Program and Chattanooga Lodge led the State with \$11.91 per Member.

The TEA Memorial Service was held Saturday morning, followed by the Ritual Toast and Flag Tribute Contests. The new Officers were installed during the GER Luncheon, President Joe Evans gave his farewell address, and new President Nick McBride gave his acceptance speech, announcing his theme for the year "Look Forward, Remember the Past." Ron spoke on his theme "Elks Pride and Community Focus" encouraging the Members to "Look Forward" and "Pay it Forward" for our Lodges and our Order. After the Luncheon, Ron sat in with Jack as he met with the current District Deputies to review their year, then met with the DD-Designates to review the DD Manual and explain what he expected from them as DDs.



Jack Frost; Ron; TEBT Nursing Scholarship Winner Abbey Evans, Sponsored by the Memphis Lodge; Tracie Hartwells; and Trust President Mike Chanelle



Ron, Nancy, and in-Coming State President Nick McBride



Ron and Michelle Bass, Exalted Ruler Toast Contest Winner from Madison Lodge

The Awards Banquet was held Saturday Night. Joe Allen, who seems to be involved in everything at the Camden Lodge and many things in the State Association, was named Elk of the Year. The Incoming ER Toast Contest was won by Michelle Bass, Madison Lodge; PSP Herschel Wilkes won the Open Toast and Flag Tribute Contests. The GER Wine Raffle, which raised \$1,195 for ENF, was won by Donna Lee from the Lewisburg Lodge. After dinner we visited the three District Hospitality Rooms, and in the West District, Ron and PSP Evans were inducted into the Ding Dong Society in a fun ceremony before a packed room of Tennessee Elks.



Ron and Tennessee Elk of the Year Joe Allen of the Camden Lodge



Ron, winner of the GER Wine Raffle Donna Lee, and in-coming State President and ENF Chairman Nick McBride.



Ron and Herschel Wilkes, winner of the Toast and Flag Contests

We left Gatlinburg on a beautiful, crisp Sunday morning and rode with Jack and Sharon through the Smokey Mountain National Park back to the Knoxville Airport. This Park is the only National Park in the U.S. that is free to visitors.

Submitted by Ron and Nancy Hicks

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