



BLAST FROM THE PAST

Alan was born and raised in Montgomery County Maryland just outside Washington D.C. Even though schoolwork was never his first priority he stuck with it and earned his undergraduate degree in criminology at the University of Maryland with an idea of becoming a probation officer. In the mid 1970's those jobs were a little scarce. He was offered the chance to work with kid's groups and enjoyed it so much he went back to school to get his Master's Degree in Education with an idea of becoming a teacher. During his first PD career with Montgomery County, Alan taught at the local Community College and with Mountain State University. We all laughed when he recalled being a part of what could be called early online classes. Of course, there was no online in those days and so he had to record lessons on VHS tapes. That really did not work, until widespread internet development, and the rest, as they say, is history.

We are always amazed at how successful people seem to make their own luck. Alan told us that typically a young cop like him would have to toil away on the streets for many years before making detective. But remember Alan had all that background in youth education so when they needed a detective for the family investigations unit of the Montgomery County Police Force, Alan got in at the age of 26 and that propelled his career dramatically.

Equally as important is finding the right partner to help along the way. Alan met his wife and best friend Debbie during this time and they were married in 1977. Money was tight in those days so there was no fancy wedding, and their honeymoon was at a local amusement park. Nine years later, when they finally did take long deserved trip together they decided to come out west to experience the 125th anniversary of the gunfight at the OK Corral in Tombstone. Well that lead them to visit Scottsdale and they just fell in love with this area.

As Alan continued up the ranks in Montgomery County, he and Debbie started to look around the country for a Chief position. Well as fate would have it, the Deputy Chief of the Scottsdale Police Department became available. He was already a Deputy Chief but this was such a great opportunity they took the job. This was in October of 2001 only a month after 9/11 so it was a crazy time to move but they did it. As it turned out, it only took him a little over a year to be promoted to Chief in 2003.

We asked Alan what the difference was between an effective police department and one that has trouble working with its citizens. He told is that the good departments embrace community policing and engagement at every level not just a few people. Scottsdale had always believed in the right kind of community policing but Alan really focused on improving that at every level. He told us that Scottsdale Leadership is a great way for



his up and coming sworn and civilian employees to learn the skills to be effective community leaders.

The one thing Alan told us he is not good at is retiring. So even after 45 years in public service and 17 years as the Police Chief of Scottsdale, when it was time to move on he knew had to find something else to do. As it turns out his friend Bob Parsons, of Go Daddy and PXG Golf Club fame, wanted to upgrade the security for all his businesses and he figured who better to do that than the former Police Chief. Bob made the offer and Alan accepted. He loves his new position and has no plans to retire anytime soon.

Alan and Debbie's two adult kids, son Michael and daughter Cody have families of their own now and they love doing things with them. Alan has always embraced community service with groups like the Scottsdale Charros. Debbie is the same way. In fact, one of the organizations they work with gives urban kids in the 5th and 6th grades the chance to be around and take care of horses and other animals. It is called Horsense and was chosen by Class 36 as one of their Project Lead it Forward activities.

Reflecting back on our conversation with Alan, we know cops can sometimes be stereotyped as being just a brute force. But we beg to differ. Behind the badge there are really good people doing a very stressful and dangerous job for all of us, and we can be proud of their efforts. Leaders like Alan Rodbell set the tone for that, and we should all be grateful for their efforts.

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