

~ A Story From 158 Years of Great Banking ~



HOW A ONE-OF-A-KIND MAN FROM A ONE-OF-A-KIND BANK HELPED BUSINESSMAN TONY GEE LIVE AN AMERICAN SUCCESS STORY

The difference between success and failure in one's life can sometimes be found in the people we meet along the way.

It was 1957 when 17-year-old Tony Gee donned an apron and began working as a porter at the Alexandria eatery, The Snack Bar. A young man of little means but great hope, Tony worked hard, learned the restaurant business and blossomed under the loving guidance of Snack Bar owners, Ruth and Salvador Galarde. "They helped with my formal and Christian education. Their impact on my life is immeasurable."

After Salvador's death in 1970, Ruth and Tony formed a corporation making Ruth President and Tony Vice President. The former porter then found himself a businessman with the responsibility of running a full-time operation. At that critical time another man entered his life, Taylor Burke, Jr., then President of Burke & Herbert, Virginia's oldest bank.

"I cannot over-emphasize the significance of Taylor Burke's involvement and attention. The care and real

interest he demonstrated in helping me made such a difference in my life," says Tony. He tells how he and Taylor almost became business partners in purchasing a block of homes in Alexandria but for one homeowner's reluctance to sell. "That he would partner with me spoke volumes of his confidence."

Taylor, who died in 2001, became far more than Tony's banker. He was a true mentor. "He believed in me when it seemed like no one else would. He was willing to look you in the eye, listen and often take a chance on a person."

These days, Tony is busy working on an autobiography he has entitled, "Opportunities of a Lifetime," about his life which has included service as a pastor and as an active community leader. As he looks back on his 68 years he ponders a very different life

had it not been for the key people he met along the way, people like Taylor Burke.

"There is a word in Latin, 'suigeneris' which means: being the only example of its kind," says Tony. "That was Taylor Burke. What a man!"



Tony Gee in front of "the one of a kind" Taylor Burke's portrait at Burke & Herbert's main office.

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