

**Tribute to My Friend and Business Partner,
Charles “Chuck” Lavaroni
(12/28/26– 4/21/15)
by Donald E. Leisey, Ed.D.**

When I received a call from Peter Lavaroni that his father had passed, I was in shock even though Chuck had warned me numerous times that the end was near. I have been proud to call Chuck my friend for the past 40 plus years. Aside from being friends, we were business partners in various educational ventures.

I first met Chuck in the early 1970s when he was the Director of Teacher Education at Dominican College, now Dominican University in Marin County, CA and I was Superintendent of the San Rafael City Schools. Chuck placed student teachers in the San Rafael City Schools and invited me to teach courses in school law, school finance and human resource management in the graduate program at Dominican College.

Chuck received his BS and MS Degrees from California State University at San Francisco and did additional graduate work at the University of California at Berkeley. He built a very impressive resume in the field of education that he entered in 1949 as a teacher. He was a school principal, assistant superintendent, and superintendent in the public schools of California. He was the Director of Teacher Education, and Dean of Admissions and Financial Aid at Dominican College.

Chuck was the owner-operator of the Kittredge School, a very successful independent school in San Francisco. While at Kittredge School, he founded and was the first president of the National Independent Private Schools Association (NIPSA), and I was a member of NIPSA’s original board. NIPSA was recognized by the US Office of Education as the accrediting agency of for-profit elementary and secondary schools.

Chuck was an inspiration to everyone he met, and his extraordinary generosity touched the lives of many people. Chuck was a multi-talented individual. He was a passionate educator, a motivating teacher, a successful educational entrepreneur having developed five corporations, a creative innovator, an educational consultant for programs in critical thinking, inquiry training, assessment and evaluation, values clarification, and individualized instruction throughout the USA and eight foreign countries. He and his wife

Barbara were generous philanthropists of the arts. Chuck was an entertaining and talented professional musician and singer, a published author of several textbooks as well as numerous articles and papers, a dynamic public speaker, a true visionary leader, and a veteran of the United States Navy serving our country in WW II.

In 1998, Chuck and I established the International Academy for Educational Entrepreneurship (IAEE) to identify, encourage, and support educators who have already invested or are interested in investing time, energy, and capital to create, develop, and market programs, products, services, and/or technologies designed to enhance and improve education. After establishing a website, www.edentrepreneurs.org, we decided the first endeavor of IAEE should be to write and self-publish a book, thus **The Educational Entrepreneur: Making a Difference**, celebrating 22 successful educational entrepreneurs from throughout the United States who created businesses for learning. In addition to interviewing these educational entrepreneurs, we used the occasion to play some wonderful golf courses on our trips. We learned a lot about each other in writing the book that is an outgrowth of our professional experiences, commitment to quality education, and passion for lifelong learning. We counseled numerous educators over the years who were interested in becoming entrepreneurs and putting their ideas into an educational business. For the past eight years IAEE has selected an Educational Entrepreneur of the Year which can be read on the IAEE website.

It was fun working with Chuck and he will be sorely missed. I cherish all the wonderful times we spent together philosophizing, dreaming, and discussing how we could improve education. I think what made us a strong team was not necessarily our similarities, but our differences. Chuck's vast experience and expertise was in curriculum development and assessment and my background is management and the business side of education. We had tremendous respect for each other and we were able to resolve what few differences we had in a respectful and productive manner.

Chuck enjoyed his family and was a loving and caring individual. He valued the time he would spend with Barbara, his wife of 65 years, and their family at their second home in Dillon Beach, CA, and family trips to Santa Cruz, Hawaii and Ashland, Oregon for the Shakespeare Festival and elsewhere. Chuck and Barbara were intrepid travelers to many countries throughout the world. Prior to our meetings, Chuck

would take time to bring me up-to-date about the activities of his family members and express how proud he was of them.

He was an enthusiastic fan of the San Francisco Giants, Forty Niners and Warriors. Chuck and Barbara traveled to Arizona for many years to see the Giants in Spring Training. Nobody loved life more than Chuck Lavaroni. He was the best friend one could have.

In his book, **The Greatest Generation**, Tom Brokaw describes Chuck's generation as: "This generation was united not only by a common purpose, but also by common values - - duty, honor, economy, courage, service, love of family and country, and above all, responsibility for oneself." I believe this summarizes the life of my good friend and business partner, Chuck Lavaroni who I have known for over 40 years. Those of us who knew Chuck, will miss his unique presence in our lives.

The following was passed on to me from our friend, Anna Pilloton, that I think will always keep Charles "Chuck" Lavaroni in our thoughts:

**THERE ARE SOME WHO BRING A LIGHT SO
GREAT TO THE WORLD THAT EVEN AFTER THEY
HAVE GONE, THE LIGHT REMAINS!!!**