

# Leaving his imprint on Texas Music Scene

David Card and Poor David's Pub celebrate 40 years.

By Jan Sikes

**P**OOR DAVID'S PUB, SET IN THE HEART OF Dallas, has been providing a live music venue since March 1977 and holds the record for the longest continuously open night club in the state of Texas. Owner, David Card, said, "No one has ever come forward to dispute that statement, so it stands."



On March 1, David Card (center) received the City of Dallas Letter of Commendation: Clare and David with friends David and Cherry Haymes

And on March 1 David Card was honored by the City of Dallas for this very reason. At the Dallas City Hall, Mayor Rawlings presented a Letter of Commendation to David for his contribution to Dallas as an established business. And, to top it off, David received an official commendation from Greg Abbott, Governor of Texas, for his contribution to the live music scene in Texas for the past 40 years. Many say it's long overdue.

In a recent interview, David reminisced about the long history of Poor David's. "Actually, the original Poor David's was purchased in 1976 and was a bar called the Eaton Run. In 1977, I had to change the name of the business into my name and that's when I called it Poor David's Pub. We started having live music on a local level a few months before that and we're still rockin' and rollin'."

He continued, "We pioneered uptown. Then, when we moved

to lower Greenville, we became a pioneer again. Every five-year anniversary that rolls around I'm surprised that it's gone by so quickly and this one is no exception."

David reminds me that forty years does happen to be four-tenths of a century. When you look at it in that context, the impact of what it means changes perspective.

The great B.W. Stevenson was a Dallas native, and after his death in late April 1988, David came up with idea to create a singer/songwriter memorial competition in his honor. So, for the past 28 years this annual competition has been held at the pub. "This is something I'm very proud of," David said.

He also mentioned that lots of the past winners of the competition have been able to go beyond and advance their careers. A complete list of past winners can be found on PDP website. Marina Rocks won the competition last year and she's a phenomenal writer and performer. Before there was an American Idol or The Voice, Poor David's Pub had the B.W. Stevenson singer/songwriter competition.

There is no doubt that David Card has been a pioneer with his unique ideas. So much so that others saw his success and attempted their own versions. And he is honored to hold that high esteem.

"We haven't had anyone hit a home run yet, but we did have Maren Morris in the competition when she was only fifteen or sixteen and she made it into the finals, so that's gotta count for something," David chuckles.

Poor David's has been a jumping off place for many artists that David spoke about.

"You know another thing that I'm extremely proud of (not that I had that much to do with it to be honest) but the evolution of the Dixie Chicks kinda grew through Poor David's Pub. In fact, their last gig at the club was March 1997 and in 1998 they won all those CMA awards. So, that brought me a lot of attention."

If you visit Poor David's Pub "About" page, you'll see this and other milestones for various artist listed. David doesn't take credit for any of those, saying he was simply running a business and trying to make a dollar.

## Anniversary lineup

TO CELEBRATE ITS 40TH Anniversary Poor David's Pub is hosting a lineup of special appearances from artists who are no strangers to the club and read like a Who's Who in the world of music.

David spoke about the month-long celebration. "During the booking philosophy for the anniversary month, there's a little bit of everything ... old, new, young, all kinds of styles ... kinda like I've done along. We've even got Noel Paul Stookey coming in and for those who don't know, he's from Peter Paul and Mary. Then there is Shake Russell, Michael Hearne, Emily Elbert, Max Stalling, Jason Eady, Walt Wilkins, Slaid Cleaves, Sara Hickman. There are so many more and each of these artists are special to me. I think each show will be a great show." Pride fills David's voice. "Patrice Pike will be there. Her first gig as a full band was at Poor David's Pub on Greenville Ave. So, anyway, it's a little bit of everything. Got some blues, some folk, some rock."

The list goes on and on.

In closing, David left me with a philosophy. "It's kind of a three-way contract with the artists, the fans and the club owner or venue. All three needs have to be met and they have to at least indirectly work together. If one of those factors gets out of whack, then something fails. What I'm trying to say is that whereas I have lasted forty years, so have the customers who have been behind me, so have a lot of the artists who have continued to play for me. It's been sort of a communion, unspoken but implicitly adhered to that has prevailed."

You can see the full 40th Anniversary celebration schedule at [poordavidspub.com](http://poordavidspub.com).



Twenty years ago, he got a little help with new sign when he opened on the Southside: David and daughter Amelia



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