

80th Birthday Celebration for Michael Towbes
benefits The Granada

It's A Wonderful Life!

By **Jacqueline Dyson** / Special to CASA

WHAT A PARTY! Surrounded by a circle of family and friends, businessman, banker, and philanthropist Michael Towbes celebrated his 80th birthday in elegance and style.

About 700 smiling well wishers gathered as an extended family to pay tribute to the man who lives by the motto "work hard and give back."

Round birthdays are often a time to reflect on where one has been and where one is going in life.

At the heart of Michael's birthday celebration was his own personal gift exchange: turn the party into a benefit for the Granada Restoration Capital Campaign, a cause near and dear to him.

With a promise by Anne and Michael Towbes to match all proceeds up to \$1.2M, the opportunity to honor Michael for his philanthropy proved irresistible. Donations and ticket requests poured in. Event planners scurried. The party sold out three times – beyond expectations – with a wait list!

It is no wonder the net proceeds of this labor of love topped the mark at around \$600,000. With Anne and Michael Towbes' dollar for dollar match, the event raised approximately \$1.2M for the Granada.

Among the lucky guests were California Attorney General Jerry Brown, Dolly and Andy Granatelli, Goleta mayor Roger Aceves and wife Debby, Brooks and Kate Firestone, and Paula Lopez from KEYT.

With master of ceremonies Debby Davison Phelps introducing the evening's program, the vast Rotunda and Plaza del Sol of Fess Parker's Double Tree Resort – complete with stage, sound, and lighting systems worthy of any performing arts center – rang with rounds of applause. Entertainers included: Eugene Chan, baritone; Elizabeth Joy Roe, classical pianist; State Street Ballet; The Santa Barbara Choral Society; Lois Mahalia and The Georgetown Band; and the Granada Music and Arts Conservatory-Student Quintet.

The capacity crowd rose to their feet and cheered for *Michael Towbes: The Musical* a lively spoof performed by Erin Gaffy de Garcia's Musical Mischief Productions. Among the merry Mischief Makers were Fred Benko, Steve Crandell, Daniel Hochman, Susan Keller, Parker Montgomery, Anne Towbes, granddaughter Allison ("Allie") Lewis Towbes, and Gil Rosas at the piano.

The Live Auction, led by John Palminteri and Andrew Firestone, featuring luxury travel and fantasy vacation getaways, drew fierce but good natured competition from the



Michael Towbes - vibrant as ever



The State Street Ballet performed.

generous bidders.

The moving video tribute to Michael Towbes viewed on two jumbo monitors brought the audience to a full stop, hanging on every word.

Personal greetings from Peter MacDougall; Leni Fe Bland; Carol Skinner, Michael's sister; Rob Skinner, Michael's nephew and COO of Montecito Bank & Trust; Janet Garufis, President and CEO of Montecito Bank & Trust; Chuck Slosser, former Director of the Santa Barbara Foundation; Henry Yang, Chancellor UCSB; and Ron Werft, President and CEO Cottage Health System who volunteered, "Michael, in all the 22 board photos at Cottage, you look exactly the same..." Michael's wife of five years, Anne, concluded with "It's been a wild and wonderful ride ... thank you for enfolding my family...and making me so comfortable with yours...I love you with all my heart."

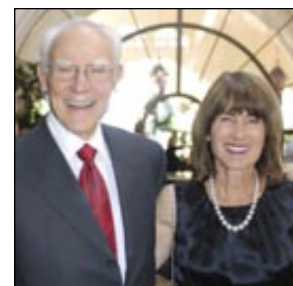
What could compare except hearing "Happy Birthday" sung during dessert by about 55 members of the SB Choral Society? That is definitely having your cake and eating it, too.

As the evening drew to a close, the party was just getting started! Dancing under the stars to Lois Mahalia & The Georgetown Band, exuberant guests rocked the house. Michael enjoyed dancing to his favorite song 'YMCA' with wife Anne, granddaughter Allison, and the family. Michael and Anne savored a special moment with the favorite, *At Last*, and shut it down with a rousing last dance *Don't Stop 'Til You Get Enough*.

When all was said and done, the party's theme summed it up well: "It's a Wonderful Life!"



It's all about family... and Michael and Anne have a beautiful one... **Allison Lewis Towbes, Lianne Towbes, Carrie Towbes, Zachery Lewis Towbes, John Lewis, Anne and Michael, Michael Smith, Nicholas Hale, and Jennifer Smith Hale**



Michael and Anne Towbes



Roger and Sarah Chrisman



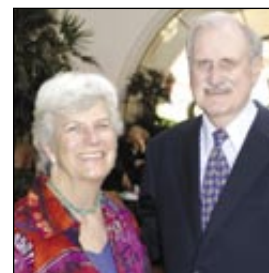
Jerry Brown, CA Atty General and Joyce Dudley, Ass't District Atty of SB



Carrie Towbes, Zac Towbes, and Allison "Allie" Lewis Towbes



Alix and Courtney Seeple with Lynette Noyes



Suzanne and Duncan Mellichamp



Michael Towbes, and Andy Granatelli



TJ and Bill Locker



Dolly Granatelli and Lady Leslie Ridley-Tree



Polly Firestone Walker, with Kate and Andrew Firestone



Wally Vandever, M.D.



Meredith Tynes and Rob Skinner



Erin Gaffy de Garcia and James Garcia



John Palminteri



Janet Garufis and David Edelman



By Musical Mischief Productions (left to right) **Allison Lewis Towbes, Erin Gaffy de Garcia; Steve Crandell; Susan Keller; Fred Benko; Honoree Michael Towbes; Anne Towbes; Parker Montgomery; Daniel Hochman; and Gil Rosas**



Susan Keller, Parker and Carolina Montgomery, Dr. Myron Shapiro, and Steven Sharpe, OSB Executive Director



Debby Davison Phelps, Emcee; Peter Frisch, Executive Director of The Granada; Marla McNally Phillips, VP Board of Directors for The Granada;

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