

EULOGY FOR DAVE MANN DECEMBER 12, 2004
PACIFIC COAST CHOPPER FEST
SEASIDE PARK VENTURA , CALIFORNIA

Hello, my name is Tom Fugle and I am from Sioux City, Iowa. I am one of the Founding members of the EL FORASTERO MOTORCYCLE CLUB, and I have had the good fortune of being a friend of Dave Mann's since 1964.

When I was asked to come and speak today I had to stop and think of what I wanted to say. Looking back, I realize how very significant it was for me to meet, and become friends with Dave. If I hadn't met him, many of the important elements in my life would have never come together. We had many great times.

Through his art, Dave allowed others to experience the freedom and live the life we both loved so much. Dave is part of a connecting force that keeps the Chopper image, and events like this Chopper Fest, alive.

Meeting Dave Mann, all had to do with Choppers. It was the Chopper that drew us together. For you to understand what I mean, I need to start by telling about the days leading up to when Dave and I met.

A lot has to do with a man named Harlan Brower, better known as Tiny, or Tiny the Beautiful. This man had a big influence on Dave's life, as well as on mine.

In telling this story I have to go back a number of years... to 1952.

I met Tiny when I was 11 years old, in Sioux City, IA. He was 13, and had moved in next door. Even at that time, Tiny was a Big guy...already 6 feet tall! He was a humorous, very intelligent person, and being a couple of years older than I was, I looked up to him, in more ways than just his size. Tiny was also a man of honor. We became very close friends.

Tiny always stood out, liked to do the unusual, and blow people's minds. He had a bicycle, which he customized. Then many of the other guys in the neighborhood did the same, so we started a Bicycle Club. We had parties, meetings and bike rides.

When Tiny turned 16 he got a '48 Chevy. Well, the Bicycle Club was abandoned. We jumped in his car, and didn't need the bicycles anymore.

Shortly after that, Tiny's family moved to Van Nuys, California, and I didn't see him again until he rode up to my house in 1961, on the wildest motorcycle I'd ever seen! He said it was a chopped Hog, a '48 Pan Head.

It wasn't real sanitary, but built with ideas that were very radical! No gas tank on the front, a bright yellow frame, stripped down Hydroglide front end, two small headlights, 24 inch high bars, 21 inch front tire, suicide clutch, jockey shift, Bates seat and pillan pad. Two bicycle fenders, side by side, came up to the center of the rear tire, a sissy bar that went up as high as the handlebars . The sissy bar supported a steel pipe, 3 inches by 2 1/2 feet long, that he used as a gas tank, which held just enough gas to go about 14 miles.

Tiny was wearing a blue jean cut-off jacket with a SATAN SLAVES patch on the back.

I had never, ever, seen a motorcycle like that before, and I have to say that, even to this day, that bike was one of the most radical ever!

I told Tiny that I, too, had a motorcycle. A '56 Harley Davidson, full dresser, that I had just wrecked. Tiny said, "Oh good! Then you got a reason to chop it." Remember, in those days there was no way of knowing about Choppers through magazines, movies, or TV, as there is today. All I had to go by was his bike. I wasn't sure what to think.

Tiny said that, "The only ones who rode dressers were Niggers and old men." and, "A dresser was only good for one thing ... to make into a Chopper."

He would always tell me, "You could chop it, save everything, and put it back to a dresser in an hour's time."

He knew that once I chopped it I would never make it a dresser again. And I never did.

Tiny had come back to Sioux City to report to the local Draft Board. Due to poor health when he was younger, he was not accepted into the service. He decided to stay in Sioux City, for the winter, saying he was gonna go back to So Cal in the spring. He stayed for many winters.

Throughout that winter we spent a lot of time together, and during that time we would go to the magazine stores, looking through Hot Rod magazines to see if there was any pictures of show cars that might show a Chopper in the background. We never found any.

No matter where we would go, Tiny's bike kept blowing people's minds, always receiving the same, "What the FUCK!" reaction from people. That's what made me want to build a Chopper! I decided to go all out, and build a Chopper that was very clean, lots of chrome and radical ideas (It won every show from 1963 through 1966).

By that summer, riding the streets, we had gotten some interest from others around town. Tiny said maybe we could get a SATAN SLAVES Charter. So he called out to California and talked to Deacon, one of the SLAVES, and Deacon said, "Send some pictures of your people". Tiny got off the phone and said, "What people? We ain't got no people. Lets start our own club, a Chopper Club."

During the summer of 1962, we started the EL FORESTERO MOTORCYCLE CLUB. The club name is significant, meaning the Outsiders, or the Strangers. Because no one knew what we were riding, or why, we decided to go with a name that no one would understand.

We seemed to be the only ones riding Choppers in the Midwest. Then in February of 1964, we went to the Kansas City Car Show.

There we met a guy named Dave Mann. He had been in California, and seen some Choppers. He liked what he saw, built one, and had entered it in the show.

When we met it was like we had known each other for years! We had something in common... The Chopper. It was something you either know, or you don't know.

Dave was also displaying his painting first bike painting, "HOLLYWOOD RUN", in front of his bike. Being an artist myself, I asked him what other paintings he had done, and he told me he mostly paints pin-up girls. I asked him why he didn't paint more bike scenes. He said he really wouldn't know what to paint.

I said, "Why don't you just paint what you see?"

Later that year, after corresponding, and getting together in Kansas City a few times, Dave wanted to know if he could be part of the Club. He became the Founder of the Kansas City Charter in February of 1965.

At approximately that same time, Dave, Tiny, and I met Grey Cat, Lucky Sprat, Fat Frank and Dan Jungroth from Minneapolis, who were also riding Choppers. They became founders of the Minneapolis Charter, in May 1965.

In February of 1966, Tiny and I went to California, and while there, we showed a photograph of the "HOLLYWOOD RUN" painting to a friend,

Big Daddy Ed Roth. At that time, Roth was changing his interests from cars to motorcycles, and could see the potential in Dave's artwork.

That same year Roth printed a series of Dave's early works as posters. These posters became Dave's first nation-wide exposure.

Some of Dave's earlier works were of myself and club members. Paintings such as "BAKERSFIELD", "BLACKBOARD CAFÉ", and "BIKERS WEDDING", etc. were done with fictitious settings, but others like "THE EL FORESTERO CAVE PARTY" actually took place in the caves under Kansas City, MO. The Easyrider Magazine centerfold, "MY (OLD) GANG" is of, from left to right, myself, Grey Cat, Tiny, Skip Taylor, Dan Jungroth.

Because of the paintings Dave Mann created, portraying Custom and Chopper style motorcycles, Choppers are bigger today than ever! Dave kept this image in the public's eye, and therefore, has helped to keep the interest alive!

For someone who once told me he wouldn't know what to paint, I feel he has painted more biker scenes and has built more motorcycles, with a paint brush, than one could have ever imagined!

I feel so privileged to have known Dave Mann, and been a part of his life. He never changed. No matter how famous Dave became, he always remained that same person that Tiny and I met, so long ago.

Dave continued, throughout the years, to send the Club paintings and letters. Many are displayed at the EL FORESTERO CLUBHOUSE in Sioux City.

I am proud to say that, after 42 years, the EL FORESTERO MOTORCYCLE CLUB is still very active, and has remained a Chopper Club, with Charters in Sioux City, IA, Kansas City, MO, Minneapolis, MN, St. Louis, MO, Des Moines, IA, Wichita, KS, and Okoboji, IA.

Since Tiny's death last year, I am the only remaining person alive who could have told this story. I want to thank everyone for listening.

Thank You.

Tom Fugle