



Mary K and
speaker Dave

Owner
Outreach Coordinator, Habitat for Humanity

last week's
Gerald, Home



ROTARY 2015-2016

Club Number 4289

January 13, 2016

SEMINOLE SMOKE SIGNALS



PRAYER FOR TODAY: Lord, thank You for the wise words
of others that help me be a better person. Amen.

PROGRAM THIS WEEK: Victor Moss, Author of the Book,
No Return Home, A Soviet World War
Love Story

PROGRAM LAST WEEK: Dave Gerald, Home Owner
Outreach Coordinator, Habitat for
Humanity of Pinellas Co.

PROGRAM NEXT WEEK: David B. Bennett, President and
CEO, Pinellas Realty Organization

Upcoming Events:

Jan. 27th	Mike and Sue Valind, Rotary Auction Trip to Africa
Feb 3rd	John Gluck, NRA Certified Firearms Instructor
Feb 10 th	Osceola HS
Feb 17th	Mark Strickland - Interim Provost at SPC Seminole
Feb 24 th	Yvonne Ulmer - Coaching By Design

Rotary Club of Seminole Officers 2015-2016:

President	Tim Ingold	Sergeant at Arms	Jim Woodworth
President Elect	Bob Matthews	Bulletin Editor	Jeff Graves/Ruth Berry
Secretary	Lorie Whitney	Past President	Gerry Miller
Treasurer	Mike McQuilkin		

District 6950 Website - www.rotary6950.org
Website - www.seminolerotary.org
Rotary Club of Seminole P.O. Box 3313 • Seminole, FL 33775-3313

Foundation honoree creates opportunities for the poor

For her work to mitigate extreme poverty around the world, Susan Davis has received many honors. But the 2015-16 Rotary Foundation Global Alumni Service to Humanity Award has special significance.

“It feels like a circle of completion,” says Davis, who was a Rotary Foundation Ambassadorial Scholar in 1980-81, doing graduate studies in international relations at Oxford University in England. “Rotary invested in me when I was young, and now is celebrating the harvest.”

A decade ago, Davis co-founded BRAC USA to advance the mission of BRAC -- Bangladesh Rehabilitation Assistance Committee -- the world's largest nongovernmental development organization, which was founded after Bangladesh’s partition from Pakistan in the 1970s. The U.S. branch is dedicated to fighting poverty and to creating opportunities for the poor in Africa and elsewhere.

Fulfilling that mission hasn’t been easy. Davis’ work has been disrupted by floods, cyclones, earthquakes, and war. Even worse was the sudden and deadly Ebola epidemic in 2014 in West Africa.

“I wasn't sure how to protect our staff and clients and accompany these vulnerable communities out of this tragic situation,” says Davis, who served as BRAC USA’s president and chief executive officer until her departure this month. She quickly contacted Ebola experts and connected them with BRAC USA’s representatives in affected countries. “I lost sleep and cried with each death,” she says.



Susan Davis shares a photo with school children in Pakistan. Davis co-founded BRAC USA to advance the mission of BRAC -- Bangladesh Rehabilitation Assistance Committee -- which is dedicated to fighting poverty.

Two of those deaths were particularly painful. Ophilia Dede, a BRAC credit officer in Liberia, and her husband succumbed to the virus, leaving behind a little girl. Davis helped set up a scholarship fund for her education.

But she doesn’t allow such painful experiences to deter her.

“The urgency of the need and the tangible opportunities to make a difference keep me going,” she says. “And I have been blessed by seeing two big ideas — microfinance and social entrepreneurship — take root globally.”

From 1987 to 1991, Davis championed microfinance while working as a program officer with the Ford Foundation in Bangladesh. She developed a consortium that raised \$175 million, increasing the availability of microloans in Bangladeshi villages to 44 percent from 5 percent, she says. Though debates endure over how much credit microfinance should receive for the country’s progress, conditions in Bangladesh have improved significantly: According to The Economist, life expectancy in the country rose from 59 to 69 during a 20-year span ending in 2010.

Davis also is co-author, with journalist David Bornstein, of the book “Social Entrepreneurship: What Everyone Needs to Know.” And she is involved with Ashoka, a nonprofit organization that supports social entrepreneurship; as a director, she oversaw its expansion to the Middle East, North Africa, and Central Asia.

A resident of New York City, Davis is widely recognized for her work in the field of international development. She was appointed to the board of the United Nations Fund for International Partnership in 2012, is a member of the Council on Foreign Relations, and has served on the boards of the Grameen Foundation, the Sirleaf Market Women's Fund, and the African Women's Development Fund USA.

Davis has come a long way from the small town in southwest Louisiana, USA, where she grew up. The Rotary scholarship provided her first opportunity to live abroad. She believes that her Oxford experience allowed her to be taken seriously, and credits it with helping her land a job with the Ford Foundation.

Perhaps most importantly, says Davis, that Rotary-sponsored year gave her an entirely new perspective on power and privilege.

“Oxford was larger than life in my imagination,” she recalls. “But when I became a part of Oxford and got to know the dons and the students, I realized that, whether rich or poor, we were all just human beings and all of us were vulnerable and full of imperfections.”

Davis will be honored at the Rotary International Convention in Korea in June.

