



## David Rust Awarded by Governor Perry for Distinguished Volunteerism

By Michael G. Maness

On Christmas morning, Dec. 25, 2014, 1:30 a.m., my good friend David Rust went to heaven, after a long and storied life, survived by his wife, Eugenia, and children and a host of friends. This was published some time ago. We will miss him.

On Thursday, April 8, 2010, Gib Lewis Prison Volunteer Chaplain David Rust, Warden Gary Currie and staff Chaplain Michael G. Maness went to Austin for the fifteenth annual Governor's Volunteer Award ceremony. Among about fifteen categories, Rust received the Texas Department of Criminal Justice's (TDCJ) Institutional Division Award. Only one person each year is selected from the vast Institutional Division, the supervising authority for all of the prisoners in Texas.

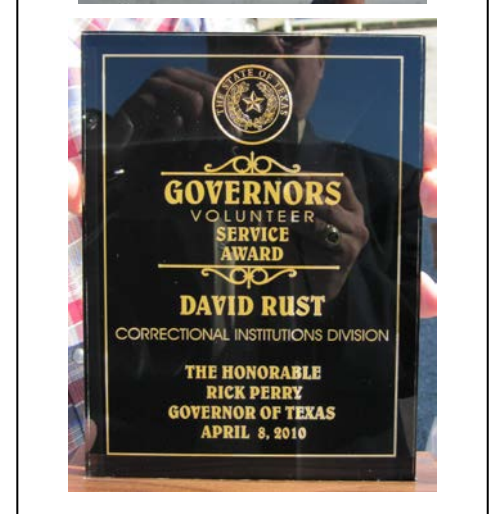
Volunteering is in David Rust's blood, and he is a natural leader every ready to help.

Along the way to Austin, a few stories were shared. While on leave in Southern California, David Rust said, "I was a Lieutenant and squad leader, with two tours in China under my belt leading squads of Flying Tigers. But at 20 years of age, they would not let me into a bar. That doomed California for me—no more California for me." It was their loss and about 40 years later our gain in Tyler County.

Stories were shared by the trio as they travelled, and it became apparent the senior member of their crew was experienced in many diverse areas, including mechanics. On one outing with the soldiers, their armored personnel carrier's carburetor linkage broke. Guess who volunteered to ride on the fender, manually tweaking the carburetor in sync with the driver shifting the transmission as they drove up the mountain to their retreat? None other than David Rust.

David has always had a flare for being at the right place at the right time. After leaving the Army-Air Force, he began a long career as an oilfield engineer with Schlumberger, a world leader in oil field exploration and supply (SLB.com).

Did you know that coldest recorded temperature in the U.S. is in Wyoming? Rust drove thousands of miles between the various rigs there. During that time, he helped his fellow roughneck engineers by voluntarily publishing a handy newsletter, thus helping them learn from each other as they solved the problems that arose in the developing oil industry.



That problem-solving initiative and leadership in the field caught the attention of the Schlumberger executives, and before long Rust was in Houston, writing and then editing their prestigious technical journal. The first-class journal was disseminated not only to fellow executives but to their elite oil and gas customers around the world. In that position, Rust *translated* what Schlumberger scientists created from their laboratories and what they assimilated from their field operations. The position required that he connect with everyone on any given facet of the operations, from the presidents of the entities to the scientists in their customer's enterprises. He has always been working with people, and his characteristic candor is appreciated by most. Those of a less honest or lazy nature are not that attracted to him.

When he retired, he began volunteering at the Harris County Jail in Houston as a volunteer chaplain, and he volunteered at his church as well, in the role of maintenance supervisor.

Yet, not all things have been easy. Rust struggled with alcoholism in his younger years, until he met his redeemer, Jesus Christ, some 40+ years ago. That conversion changed his life. Not only in church, but as an Alcoholic Anonymous survivor, he has stretched out a helping hand in faith.

David married Eugenia early on, his sweetheart, and she has stood beside him in all of their ups and downs as his best friend, confidante, and prayer partner. David enjoys problem solving and is the consummate student. At home, he always has a new book by his reading chair, and he is a regular patron at the Shivers Library.

In 1994, the Rusts moved to Woodville, and he almost immediately began volunteering at the prison, via his friend John Morrison, then owner of the Tyler County Booster. As fortune would have it, David went through the training and became a certified chaplain, allowing him access to the entire prison. Chaplain Maness said, "Rust has excelled in every way, and the staff and inmates love him. On a few occasions in the last 10 years, the wardens and senior security have viewed him as 'staff,' instead of a volunteer." An appellation earned from his steady service.

At the Gib Lewis Prison, five to six days a week, David visits especially the high security, super-max side of the prison. These prisoners are locked up 23 hours a day, with an hour of recreation in a secured area. Some of these are the most troubled in the world. Many are gang members. Some are on psych meds. For some, David is the *only* "friend" who sees them, in the Lord, of course.

He helps the staff chaplain, the security chiefs, and other volunteers with all aspects of the prison ministry program, and that includes the delivery of death and critical illness notifications to the prisoners. He has mentored individual prisoners, led worship services, and has led the Alcoholic Anonymous for fifteen years at the prison and in the Tyler County community.

On clear days, you can see him riding his bicycle to the prison, to help save the economy and enjoy the fresh air. He has always been an outside man.



David Rust on bicycle going to work at the Gib Lewis Prison, Woodville, Texas

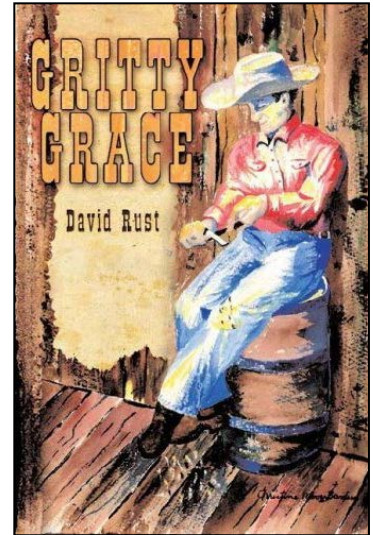


Since the Rusts live close to the prison, one of their traditions is to say a prayer for the prisoners when the “prayer whistle” blows, also known as the count whistle, a standard fog horn at the prison that marks the beginning and end of the count times during the daylight hours. Every Saturday evening, the Rusts open their home to their Bible study group, apply named the Fellow Sheep.

He has been a long-time member of the Episcopal Church, volunteering there in many capacities. He has helped the local Caring Is Sharing in their collection and distributions. At the Heritage Village, a living museum of pioneer history of the area, he can be seen demonstrating the art of shingle splitting, mostly with cedar, as cypress is hard to come by these days.

At the local Woodville Lions Club, he has been a featured speaker on such topics as the Flying Tigers in China, oil field advances, the T. Boone Pickens Plan, and other topics.

Last but not least, for these nearing twenty years, he has written a weekly article in the Tyler County Booster under the byline of *Professions*. These articles recall stories from his vast experience and special studies of practical interest. You will a war story from time to time, a note about China, an oil field exploit, anecdotes and moral philosophy on history, frustrations over superfluous waste, and joking jabs at technological gadgetry and gimmickry. Often, he does a special study that informs his devoted audience of some hitherto obscure history or mechanical wonder. His family and friends encouraged him to write a book. So he did, editing a selection of his best Booster articles for his *Gritty Grace* (2009), available at Amazon.com and locally at the Art League and the Heritage Village.



David Rust, or “Super Dave” as the prisoners like to call him, is available with a caring heart, full of tried experience, and ready with a prayer. Thanks David, for all you do.



David and Eugenia Rust at Gib Lewis with Christmas Card crew 2011