

Party ends for former Ooze Brother, club owner Bruce Davis

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May 2, 2001

Bruce Henry Davis, who friends say never needed much of a reason to throw a party, died Friday of kidney and liver failure. He was 52.

"If a leaf fell from a tree it would be reason enough for him," joked Pete Selin of Dallas.

Davis, a Houston native and 1967 Spring Branch High School graduate, was a businessman and club owner.

His troubled ad agency, which he opened in 1974, seemed the perfect venue for a Going Out of Business celebration during its early financially troubled days. The party had just the right hook to become an annual event for about 20 years.

"People gave him business because they felt sorry for him," quipped another longtime friend Richard Hudgins, 52.

Most of Davis' Going Out of Business parties were held at Fitzgerald's on White Oak. Davis hosted his last party about four years ago, friend Tommy Dardar said.

"He told me he was going to quit because he spent no less than (the money equivalent of) three trips to Europe and umpteen ski vacations on the parties," said Dardar, 50.

Davis was also known for his bawdy Porno Picnic parties in the early '80s in which festival-goers would wear almost nothing and get in for about the same, Hudgins said.

Hudgins and Davis teamed up as the Ooze Brothers in 1979 and performed cover song parodies at jazz festivals, Porno Picnics and other parties. Hudgins played Mongo to Davis' Lloyd.

"We took songs and bastardized them -- anything was fair game," said Hudgins, who played the plastic saxophone.

Some of the group's favorite tunes included *Tie the Ayatollah Around the Old Oak Tree* and *I Shot John Lennon, (But I Did Not Shoot the Deputy)*, which did not go over well with most crowds, Hudgins admits. The group disbanded in 1982, but not before releasing an album with two covers.

Davis' sense of humor also was expressed through his "crazy" wardrobe which included leopard-skin pants, wool chaps and a "Born to Ooze" T-shirt.

"He had a great collection of outlandish hats," said Dardar, whose band, the Sheetrockers will play at Davis' memorial on May 20. "He's not your run-of-the-mill-type person, especially when it came to dress."

In addition to his agency, Davis also had business ties to Club Hey Hey, which opened in 1987, at the corner of Washington and Heights Boulevard. Davis also invested in Pat & Pete's Blues Burgers, which opened in 1993 at 311 Travis. Both are now closed.

"When he was involved he brought more than money, he brought vitality and a unique way of looking at things," said Selin, 47, who ran the businesses with his wife, Pat.

"He was an amazing, creative force."

Years of partying took a toll on Davis, friends said.

"The last time I saw him in the hospital he still had his wit," Dardar said.

A memorial party will be conducted for the Houston native from 1 to 6 p.m. May 20 at the Shady Tavern, 1206 W. 20th. Davis donated his body to Baylor Medical School.