

## Mr. San Diego 2019-Michael Brunker



Patti Roscoe  
Editor

San Diego Rotary Club 33 has a long tradition of notable speakers gracing our dais, presenting programs on a broad spectrum of topics, from local issues to the outer reaches of space. Few are more anticipated than the annual proclamation of a Mr., Mrs., Ms. San Diego, or a combination thereof. The Grant Club started the recognition in 1952, with the first recipient being Joseph E. Dryer. The recipients are now selected by Club 33 past presidents, the brain-trust of the organization. Parameters for being selected reflect Rotary's *Service Above Self*. Nominees should be a living person, not now in government elective office, who has contributed outstanding community betterment to the San Diego region in a variety of ways, through his/her efforts over a long period of time. All past recipients appear in the Rotary directory and are a Who's Who of individuals who have helped shape the history of San Diego. Thanks to Chair of the Day, **Fred Frye**, and his committee for overseeing another great program.

This year, Club 33 is honored to include **Michael Brunker** to its long list of luminaries. Michael began life in Detroit, Michigan, and can regale you with stories of famous sports figures, an assistant coaching stint with the Detroit Pistons, and a cross country move to San Diego to become an assistant coach at San Diego State University. Over the years, Michael learned he had a gift of reaching troubled kids. He has used that skill throughout his career, coaching and mentoring at the Jackie Robinson Y or through many of Club 33's youth programs. Michael is a proud family man. He and Maria Elena are raising five children using life skills of faith, love, community involvement, and education. Another gift Michael has is that of fundraising. He is passionate about his work and not shy when asking for financial help. He almost singlehandedly led the efforts to rebuild and update the Jackie Robinson Y, which serves an ever-expanding geographic and demographic of children and adults.

**President David** called on **Cecil Steppe** for an Inspirational Moment. Cecil spoke of selfless service. **Larry Hoeksema** and **Bryan Verhoye** led us in our salute to Old Glory and *God Bless America*. **Fred Frye** introduced past recipients and widows of past recipients and civic leaders in attendance, including **Mayor Kevin Faulconer** and Assemblyman **Todd Gloria**. There were a number of proclamations, including one declaring Sept 19, 2019, as *Michael Brunker Day* for the City of San Diego. Our Club 33 singers did a wonderful and personalized rendition of "YMCA" tailored by word-smith **Suzy Spafford**. *If you weren't in attendance, look out for the forthcoming video recording of the program in the next Rotator!*

Michael Brunker, Jr., one of five Brunker children, honored his father with heartfelt remarks about his dad being a guy from Detroit who moved to San Diego and loved both cities. He shared how his dad spent his life in service to the community by helping kids, unafraid to ask for donations to his cause. He lovingly joked about their garage being filled to the brim with products used to help families in need.

Mayor Faulconer recalled a meeting where Michael showed him a rendering of a grand new Jackie Robinson Y building. When the Mayor asked how Michael thought he could get it done, Michael's response was "WE are going to do it!" Not only did Michael lead the charge, he got it done with no debt and despite it being built on a flood plain. It is now one of the flagship Ys in the country.

We heard from two close friends of Michael's, **Bevelynn Bravo** and the Reverend **Amos Johnson, Jr.**, each with stories of Michael's relentless mission of ridding neighborhoods of gang involved violence and helping kids at risk. Reverend Johnson was on the search committee when the Jackie Robinson Y was looking for a new leader. Michael was an employee of the San Diego Police Athletic League at the time and was asked what traits he thought were needed for the new hire.

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## Next Meeting

**Next Meeting:  
September 26**

**SDSU Football Coach  
Rocky Long**

Rocky Long is the winningest coach in Mountain West history and a three-time Mountain West Coach of the Year. Under Coach Long, the Aztecs have won three league titles in his eight years as head coach and advanced to a bowl game all eight seasons. He led SDSU to its first back-to-back 11-win campaigns in the program's 95-year history from 2015-16 and followed with a 10-win season in 2017. He has helped San Diego State post a 5-1 record against the Pac-12 Conference since the start of the 2016 season, which is the best mark against Pac-12 schools.

Coach Long will be speaking on the topic of the current state of Aztec Football and their leadership.



**Chair of the Day  
Jordan Harrison**

## QUICK BITS

## Mr. San Diego 2019 continued from page 1

## CALENDAR



The Auction Committee is in need of airline miles or hotel points to complete a couple of terrific auction items. If you haven't donated yet and have miles or points you can donate, please contact Auction Committee member [Ginny Ollis](#) to coordinate.

Remember, our auction is **December 5th** and your support directly impacts those who need us in the community!

TO DONATE AN ITEM FOR THE AUCTION, [CLICK HERE](#) TO COMPLETE THE ONLINE FORM

Thank you!

## BIRTHDAYS

### September

Doug Wilson	23
Will Newbern	23
Al Wasserman	23
Mark Stuart	24
Peter Bowie	27
Steve Gross	27
Haney Hong	27
Mike Rowan	28
Chris Sichel	28

Michael created binders for each board member that outlined what was required and sent three or four follow-up faxes per day with other ideas he had. The board realized they had their leader in their midst and Michael was hired.

Michael Cage, an Aztec who made it big in the NBA, and College Hall of Famer and sports broadcaster, Dick Vitale, sent videos. The links are included and well worth the watch: Michael Cage video - <https://vimeo.com/361167290> Dick Vitale video - <https://vimeo.com/361167784>

Bill Walton was in the audience and spoke of Michael's spirit and passion and acknowledged that Michael "saved my life" when Bill was a young man chasing a dream of playing pro ball. Michael became a *dad* to Bill's four children, insuring they had a strong guiding hand.

As you can imagine, the program ran beyond our 1:30PM stop point, so Michael had little time to respond. We did learn that he was born in 1952, the same year the recognition began at Club 33. He acknowledged his wife, Maria, whose strength and love supported him throughout their 43 years together. He spoke of Martin Luther King and a quote Michael uses often, "A life is not important except for the impact it has on other lives." Michael's final words were those of his father, who passed away 22 days after the birth of his first grandson. They are words by which Michael lives. "Be thankful for what you have. Nobody owes you anything." Well, Michael Brunner, Club 33 owes you our gratitude for all that you have given back. You truly exemplify "Service Above Self." (Here is the link to Michael's acceptance speech <https://youtu.be/epssj9P1H-k>)



Mayor Faulconer presents Michael with the 2019 Mr. San Diego Award.

ALL MEETINGS ARE HELD AT LIBERTY STATION CONFERENCE CENTER UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED

### September

**26 Rocky Long-SDSU Football Coach**

### October

**3 Don Buchheit-Human Trafficking Awareness**

**10 JoAnne Simerson-Polar Bears: Our History and Their Future**

**17 Scott Brunner-FBI Special Agent San Diego Field Office**

## GROTARIAN EVENT

Stay tuned for details for upcoming events:

October—TBD

November—Marston House

December—Christmas at the Timken

January - Fireside Chat

Remember you can always find upcoming event details on our website at [www.sandiegorotary.club](http://www.sandiegorotary.club) and on our app.



You can download the free San Diego Rotary app on your phone and tablet from the App Store or Google Play. Just search "San Diego Rotary".

**Meetings: Every Thursday at Noon, Liberty Station Conference Center, 2600 Laning Road, San Diego, 92106**

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# YOUTH CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

San Diego Rotary has over 50 Committees. Of those, one half are involved, in one way or another, and at one time or another, with YOUTH in our community!

Because so many members of our Club have committed themselves, together with other family members and friends, to volunteering their time and talents through involvement with youth, **Rotary International's and District 5340's Youth Protection Policies and Processes** take on considerable significance. Through the course of our members' service in our local communities and neighborhoods, and by entrusting a young person to our care and supervision in safeguarding them from suffering emotional, mental or physical harm, youth protection is of the highest priority!



[This information sheet](#) includes a list of our Club's committees which require the "CERTIFICATION" of any Club 33 members, family members or friends, who could be involved with youth through the course of their committee service. The information also explains the process for completing the application, including undergoing a background check, and training and testing for becoming compliant with current Youth Protection policies. You must complete all 3 requirements in order to become certified. In support of our Club's efforts regarding certification, the District will maintain an electronic file of all applications received, background checks conducted and training completed.

**Certification expires 2 years from the background clearance date, with the exception of Youth Exchange hosts, who must renew annually.**

I would request that all **youth service committee chairs listed on the information sheet** thoroughly review the [Youth Protection Policy](#) and the [Youth Protection FAQs](#) to insure that every participant on your committee is properly certified in accordance with the latest requirements. **We will be holding a meeting on Thursday, Sept 19 after our program so that we can address any questions you may have.**



Please feel free to contact me with any questions and I'll do my best to either give or get an answer to you just as promptly as possible. You can also find all of certification information on the District's website here <https://rotary5340.org/sitepage/youth-protection/youth-certification>. Your cooperation is imperative and deeply appreciated.

Thank you very much!

[Larry Hoeksema](#)  
Chair-Youth Protection  
[larryh@mosherdrew.com](mailto:larryh@mosherdrew.com)



# FACES IN OUR CROWD

Photos courtesy of Paul Nestor



(Left) 2004 Mr. San Diego recipient Cecil Steppe started the program with the Inspirational Moment; (right) Michael Bruncker, Jr. had the honor of introducing his father.



(Left) The Club 33 Singers celebrated Michael with a very special version of the song “YMCA”; (right) guest speaker Bevelynn Bravo shared how Michael’s act of kindness impacted the lives of her family.



(Left) Guest speaker Reverend Amos Johnson, Jr. talked about Michael’s leadership at the Jackie Robinson YMCA; (right) Michael was treated to guest videos from Michael Cage and Dick Vitale.



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Photos courtesy of Paul Nestor



(Left) Bill Walton joined us and also said a few words of congratulations to Michael; (right) Fred Frye served as the Chair of the Day.



(Left) Michael with his wife Maria and son Michael, Jr; (right) 1998 Mr. San Diego **Malin Burnham** and Assemblymember Todd Gloria.



(Left) Reginald Gary congratulates Michael; (right) **Joe Craver** (Mr. SD 2010), **Mark Trotter**, **Peter Ellsworth** (Mr. SD 2011) and **Hal Sadler** (Mr. SD 2007)



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Photos courtesy of Paul Nestor



(Left) Maggie Coleman (widow of Jerry Coleman, Mr. SD 2005) and Virginia Graham; (right) Randy Jones, Eugene Bailey and Rev. Amos Johnson, Jr.



(Left) Michael with 2002 Ms. San Diego **Deborah Szekely**; (center) Cecil Steppe with his grandson, **Brandon Steppe**; (left) 2014 Mr. San Diego **Tom Hom** and Jean Savard.



(Left) Earl Woolridge; Sharon Powell and Elizabeth Tate; (right) Michael with Timothy Fennell.