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Cracker Barrel Says Goodbye to Founder Dan W. Evins

Visionary Built Highly Differentiated Concept with Genuine Hospitality and High Quality Standards

LEBANON, Tenn.--(BUSINESS WIRE)-- Cracker Barrel Old Country Store, Inc. (Nasdaq: CBRL) today extended condolences to the family of Founder and Chairman Emeritus Dan (Danny) W. Evins and expressed sadness at the loss of the man who first conceived of a restaurant that would provide a safe and welcoming home-away-from-home for travelers. Mr. Evins was 76 when he passed away on January 14 in Lebanon, Tenn.

In remembering Danny, Cracker Barrel Executive Chairman Michael A. Woodhouse expressed his sympathy and said, "I first met Danny when I joined Cracker Barrel in 1995 and knew immediately what a rare individual he was. Danny was a straight-shooter and dedicated to authenticity. It was an honor and a responsibility that I took seriously to follow Danny as CEO, and then as Chairman when he retired." Woodhouse added, "Danny was the keeper of this special brand for so many, many years, and he left us with a strong culture that values quality and honesty. He will be missed deeply."

Cracker Barrel President & Chief Executive Officer Sandra B. Cochran said, "Cracker Barrel has remained true to Danny's vision in many ways, including the insistence on quality products at a fair price, and on genuine Southern hospitality. How Danny thought about his guests and his business from the beginning is captured in 'Pleasing People,' our mission statement." She added, "We will continue to protect the concept and honor Danny's legacy by staying true to the brand and to the principles that were there at the beginning."

Danny was a Shell Oil "jobber" in 1969 when he decided to open up a restaurant on Highway 109 in Lebanon, Tenn., the community in which he lived. The restaurant had a small gift shop attached. Because Danny was modest and humble, he always downplayed his contributions to the business and attributed the company's success to good luck. But Danny knew that with the new interstate highway system, people would be traveling more. He built his business by treating his guests with genuine hospitality, offering good tasting country cookin' and charging a fair price, so that they would stop again when they were traveling back in the other direction. That approach to business led to the company's mission statement, "pleasing people," a mission statement which is about mutual respect, and which still guides all 67,000 employees today.

Danny named his restaurant Cracker Barrel Old Country Store® to recall the country stores of his youth in rural Tennessee where people would gather around to play checkers on top of an empty barrel that had been used to deliver crackers to the store, and catch up on the latest news in their small towns. He offered the Southern country cooking he had grown up on, using many family recipes, and decided to decorate the walls with authentic antiques. Danny never compromised on the quality of ingredients for the meals he served or on the quality of the gifts he sold in his retail shop, regardless of what corners the competition might be cutting. These traditions of quality and authenticity are carried on to this day.

Danny was often asked if he had ever thought that Cracker Barrel would grow so large and become such a favorite with guests. He would respond with a mock-serious "yes," and then smile as he added an offer to sell the Brooklyn Bridge to anyone who was naïve enough to believe that he had planned such growth in advance. But he knew that the idea of an old country store would be well-received outside of the South, in parts of the country that had as their traditions the very similar general stores and trading posts of the old days.

Danny was beloved by so many Cracker Barrel employees and built a unique culture that encouraged them to stay. Indeed, Cracker Barrel is fortunate to enjoy very low turnover rates and has a large number of employees who have been with the company for 20 and 30 years and more. He initiated the industry-leading Personal Achievement Responsibility, or PAR, training program, which provides for increased benefits for employees as they progress through the program from "Rising Star" to "PAR IV", and he insisted that Cracker Barrel develop computer-based-training programs years before it was standard in the industry.

Danny also kept his eye on the guest experience and was very concerned about maintaining the company's unique culture as the chain grew from its core markets in the South to reach the 42 states that it is in today. Among other innovations, he is credited with conceiving Cracker Barrel's popular book-on-audio program, which allows guests to purchase a book-on-audio at one location and then return it to any other location and get a new book-on-audio for only a nominal exchange fee.

Danny served as Chief Executive Officer from 1969 to 2001, and as Chairman of the Board until he retired in 2004, at which time he became Chairman Emeritus and a member of the Cracker Barrel Founders Board.

About Cracker Barrel

Cracker Barrel Old Country Store® provides a friendly home-away-from-home in its old country stores and restaurants. Guests are cared for like family while relaxing and enjoying real home-style food and shopping that's surprisingly unique, genuinely fun and reminiscent of America's country heritage...all at a fair price. The restaurant serves up delicious, home-style country food such as meatloaf and homemade chicken n' dumplins as well as its signature biscuits using an old family recipe. The authentic old country retail store is fun to shop and offers unique gifts and self-indulgences.

Cracker Barrel Old Country Store, Inc. (Nasdaq: CBRL) was established in 1969 in Lebanon, Tenn. and operates 608 company-owned locations in 42 states. Every Cracker Barrel unit is open seven days a week with hours Sunday through Thursday, 6 a.m. — 10 p.m., and Friday and Saturday, 6 a.m. - 11 p.m. For more information, visit: crackerbarrel.com.

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