



**MARTIN BLECK MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP FOR
CULINARY, HOSPITALITY, VITACULTURE* OR OENOLOGY****



Martin Bleck, 1968-2022, described himself as a self-taught and unknown catering chef. He contended there are no “famous” catering chefs. That being said, locally he made a name for himself through the Subterra-A Wine Cellar Restaurant and Rogue Gourmet Catering. Both located in Newberg, OR the restaurant became a destination for the wine region and coast travelers. For locals, it was a celebration destination. Although he may not have been an international star, he was an accomplished chef, artist, wine connoisseur, entrepreneur, boss, husband and father.

Diners were attracted to Martin’s international dishes, enhanced flavors and his cutting edge sense of humor. Humor was necessary when faced with challenging circumstances in the unknown territory of catering on location. He learned to repair, build and fix to make it happen. His artistic aesthetic extended to quilt making, glass fusing, wood projects and more. During one of his creative bursts, Martin started creating spice and rub mixes for Subterra. Shortly after, Soroptimists approached the Bleck’s and our nonprofit was blessed to be able to market and sell the line of original spices. The profits from this line of spice blends immensely grew the amount of money that the club used for educational scholarships.

Annually, Soroptimists held a signature fundraiser, Soup’s On. For 5 consecutive years, Martin prepared and donated his best soups: Corn chowder, crème of mushroom & Cuban black bean were his hearty soups. Again, his generosity helped Soroptimist raise money for service projects and educational scholarships.

Digressing to his German upbringing and training, Martin, graduated from the University of Miami. He received a Bachelor of Fine Arts from the school of communication with a double major in motion picture production and theatrical direction and a minor in telecommunication. But while he was a student on a small budget, he began to teach himself to cook by watching tv programs and avidly reading all types of cookbooks. He learned he loved cooking and that passion overtook the industry of film production. He landed his first chef job with none other than his now wife, Janet with her catering company in Miami. Eventually they sold that very successful company and made the move to Oregon.

This scholarship is in honor of the “flavors” that Chef Martin Bleck brought to our “berg”. Also in memory of his creative and generous spirit, by sharing his time and talent within our community. Soroptimist of Chehalis Valley want to continue to honor his contributions and encourage other rising stars to follow this same passion of food, flavor and table through financial support of scholarships for culinary, hospitality, viticulture and oenology.

Soroptimist: Our name means “best for women.” And that’s what we strive to be—women at our best, investing in other women and girls to be their best. A global volunteer organization that provides women and girls with access to the education and training they need to achieve economic empowerment.

*Viticulture: the study and practice of cultivating grapevines, usually with the overall goal of producing fruit that is suitable for some specific end purpose. **Oenology: *the science and study of wine and winemaking.* Oenology is distinct from viticulture, which is the science of the growing, cultivation.