

Never a stranger to the spotlight, Danny Gans was much talked of during his life, and the attention has not diminished following his death. Gans will not just be remembered for his professional success — his ability to entertain, record-breaking crowds, or being named “Las Vegas Entertainer of the Year” for 12 years in a row — but because of what an integral part of the Las Vegas community he became.

Gans’ passing did not only leave a hole in the Las Vegas entertainment scene and in the lives of those who knew him best, but also affected thousands of valley residents who may never even have met him. Not only a talented performer, gifted athlete and family man, Gans was a philanthropist and possessed a strong regard for the people of Las Vegas.

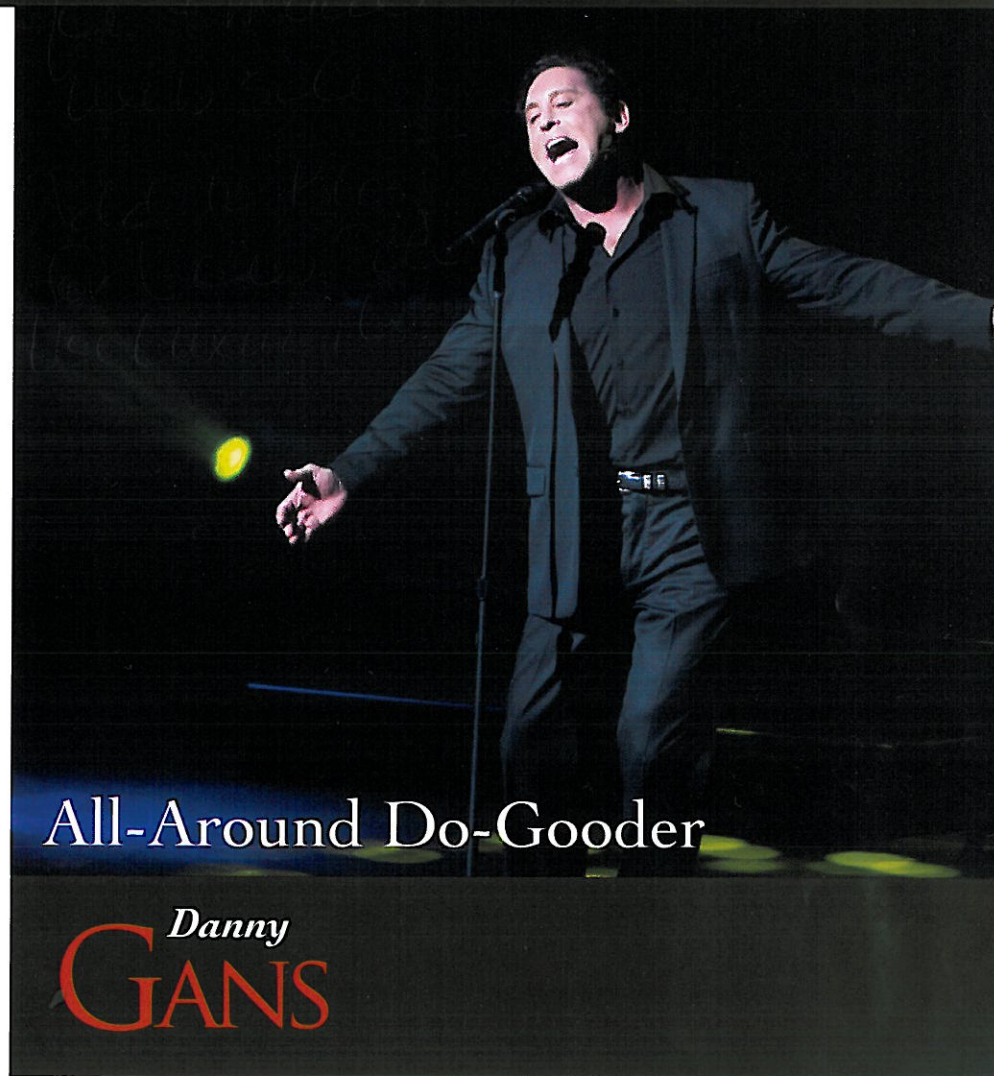
Far from being just a headliner on the Strip, Gans embraced his adopted hometown and in the 13 years he lived here became a significant supporter of numerous organizations.

He hosted and donated to the annual Champions Run for Life in conjunction with the Nevada Childhood Cancer Foundation (NCCF), adopting the original race created by the NCCF and growing it from a small event for the children served by the foundation, to an event of over 1,500 participants.

“When Danny heard about this and wanted to be a part of it, he brought something so very magical to our event,” said Jeff Gordon, President and CEO of the Nevada Childhood Cancer Foundation. “The clarity of his convictions, the choices that he made, and the promises he kept vaulted this little event into a major happening in our community. His positive attitude simply caused a chain reaction of positive thoughts and outcomes that served as a catalyst for some extraordinary results. We will forever be indebted to Danny Gans and the brightness of hope he so freely gave to so many of our children.”

The 5K run and children’s walk raises money to benefit the needs of critically-ill children and their families living in Southern Nevada. This year Donny Osmond will continue the tradition and host the newly entitled Danny Gans Memorial Champions Run for Life.

Gans was also involved with First Tee of Southern Nevada in hosting their Annual Danny Gans Partee Fore Kids Golf Tournament



All-Around Do-Gooder

Danny
GANS

during the past six years. Proceeds from this celebrity Pro-Am tournament benefit the organization, as well as the Danny Gans Junior Golf Academy whose collective mission is to impact the lives of young people by providing educational programs that promote character development and life-enhancing values through golf.

“Danny was always open, had a smile on his face and he loved the game of golf, the kids were able to see that with him. His death was a huge hit for us emotionally, as well as financially. He was one of the great men who understood what it meant to give back to the community,” said Danielle Gladd, Executive Director of First Tee of Southern Nevada.

This year Rita Rudner will host the event in honor of Gans which is newly entitled the Danny Gans Partee Fore Kids Celebrity Pro-Am Memorial Event. “We want to honor Danny in all he has done for the community.

I don’t think people realize just how much he did,” explained Gladd.

In addition to supporting his own fundraising events, Gans contributed to other charitable efforts throughout the valley as well. He became a staple in the annual Four Corners Food Drive, hosted by local radio personalities Mark and Mercedes (Mix 94.1), after one memorable year when they had set an unprecedented goal of collecting 250,000 cans of food, but on the last day still found they were significantly short.

“We were around 220,000. Danny called us and said that he was going to contribute. Most celebs were donating about \$1,000 which was equal to 3,000 cans, so we were hoping for that. When Danny found out where we were with our goal, he said that there was no way he was going to let us not reach our goal, so he donated the remaining 30,000 cans.”

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Kris ENGELSTAD McGarry

no other pulmonary project in the State of Nevada and they basically operated out of two closets. So when they asked for funding it didn't seem like much of a leap for us. Hopefully with those students, we will help them and they will stay in Nevada. We hope for the ripple effect and that it will be Nevadans helping Nevadans.

As for Nevada Cancer Institute, the Foundation donated \$15 million and has committed an additional \$20 million for lung cancer research and infrastructure.

Have you received letters or stories of how your work has changed somebody's life?

We give lots of small donations. My mother in particular is famous for pulling articles she sees and sending a gift. Most times anonymously. I asked her if it didn't matter to her if they knew and she said 'no.' She just wanted to go to bed feeling good that these people were in a better place.

Who instilled in you the act of giving back?

The greatest gift my parents gave to me was the desire to give. If I could epitomize the

gift of giving, it would be my mother and her desire to let it go and give it away. There's not a house I could live in or a car I could drive that gives me a feeling as good as this. We were fortunate with what we had and had more than we needed. Our family is dedicated to giving back to this community and doing the right thing. It's nothing more complicated than living the golden rule.

How has the Engelstad generosity enriched your life?

First, I am more appreciative for all that I have, if that's even possible. Second, I am exposed to people in the community who are less fortunate so I count my blessings. And third, it makes us, as a family, want to dig deeper and see how much more we can do. There's nothing exceptional about who you are. If you end up in the circumstances we have, you have an obligation to look after others.

Danny GANS

Food drive finished. After that, every year he would make the last donation to help us hit our goal and he was forever named Danny

'Cans' to us," recalls Mercedes of *Mark and Mercedes in the Morning*.

One of the reasons Gans was so successful in becoming a respected member of the city was due to his ability to identify with its inhabitants. Though a fixture on the Las Vegas Strip, he looked beyond the city's shiny exterior and connected with the community in a real way. As Mercedes explains, "People often just look at the 'shell' of Las Vegas. If you don't live here, that's all you see — The Strip, the Cirque shows, the nightclubs. Danny was not the most famous person to people on the outside. But he was part of what makes Vegas special to those of us that live here."

Gans' longtime manager and friend Chip Lightman sums it up best with this statement, released shortly after Gans' passing, "Danny Gans will not only be remembered as a Las Vegas entertainer, but as a man who loved his family, loved God and loved the city of Las Vegas."

In the face of his untimely death, there is comfort in one fact, that through his compassionate legacy this 'Man of Many Voices' will never be silenced within the community that knew him best.

Kim CANTENWALLA

growing up and not having enough to take care of themselves—it shouldn't be that way. I don't think it has anything to do with being a chef, it's just compassion.

What is the most fulfilling part of giving back to the community?

That you are making some kind of impact. Not everyone can give financially, but if you can give your time and assist and provide something then you are helping out. Awareness is key. We know every city has their challenges and needs, but when you go to Three Square and actually hear the statistics, it kind of blows your mind. You look at the Strip and so much of what is there is so over the top, and when you get to the food bank it is a more humble place.

In your opinion why is community development so important to Las Vegas?

This is home. These are the people who are going to make this city grow. A lot of what Three Square is doing is for kids and they are the next generation. So many people move here from all over the country so the number keeps growing, and their kids are growing

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