

From “People Share Their ‘Good’ Celebrity Encounters”

This woman went on a date with David Dawn when she was a teenager.

I knew David Dawn before he was even Davy Dawn, when he was still a kid named L.D. Cooper back in Dayton, Ohio, where we both grew up. He and I both attended a community arts program on Saturdays back in the late 60’s when we were ten and eleven years old. I didn’t know him all that well, but I did know him, because there were only a few dozen kids in the program. I actually witnessed him both act and sing on stage for the first time. He was one of the stand outs of the program, which should come as no surprise.

Back in 1975, when we were both 16 going on 17, and he had become a TV star and had hit records out, he did a concert tour that stopped in Dayton. A local TV station, WLWD, got together with our local AM pop radio station, WING, to sponsor a “win a date with David Dawn” contest that I and I’m sure hundreds, if not thousands, of local girls entered. It included two free tickets to the show, back stage passes, and a dinner date with him the next night. I won and was ecstatic.

The concert was great. We had front row seats. It was me and my mom. I wanted it to be my best friend, but the rules said I had to be with an adult when I went back stage. I also had to be accompanied by an adult on the dinner date, and that again was my mom. The back stage thing after the show was pretty fast, in and out. There were other girls, and a few guys, who also had won free tickets and back stage passes. And they were all minors accompanied by a parent or other adult. It was a really quick meet-and-greet thing where he signed an autograph, and, with most kids, posed for a picture. We didn’t think to bring a camera, but we had the next night to bring one, so I wasn’t kicking myself. He chatted briefly with each kid.

He sort of recognized me and I think he was relieved to find out we had the community arts program in common. I think it was going to make the blind date the next night easier for him since I wasn’t a complete and total stranger. I wanted him to autograph my *Just By Being You*, album jacket but I knew I could get that signed on our date so I didn’t have to bring it to the concert.

That meet-and-greet between us was maybe only five minutes long. But the next night I had him, sort of, all to myself for about three hours. It was just him and me...and three adult chaperones: my mom, a lady from WLWD, and his aunt and manager, Linda. Oh yeah, and a photographer.

A limousine picked us up at our house. He wasn’t in it. He would be at the restaurant. Our date was at one of the fanciest restaurants in Dayton, The Pine Club. It really wasn’t the perfectly ideal date place for a couple sixteen-year-olds, but it made it even more special, and made me feel like it was more of an adult date, despite the fact that we were not alone. Although we did get our own booth, but with my mom and the other two adult women embarrassingly close by, and the photographer, who occasionally popped up to snap a photo for publicity.

It was kind of awkward at first, but as we started talking about the arts program and reminiscing about it and the really cool guy that was the director, we both lost our nervousness and got

comfortable. We talked about the grade schools we went to and I shared about my high school, which was Fairmont West. He didn't go to a high school. He had a private Montessori tutor that he took private school lessons from because of his schedule. He liked her quite a lot, though.

He also told me that the contest hadn't said where the date would be because they didn't want a bunch a fans staking the place out to ambush him for autographs and such. Some people close to the contest had actually leaked some rumors that it would be at a few completely different places as a diversion.

Anyway he was really polite, sweet, and charming and told me all sorts of things about being on the *Grand Point* TV show, about touring, about making the movie *Shadows In The Alley*, and that he was about to make another movie before he started shooting the next season of the TV show. I was utterly swooning and felt so privileged that I was getting such a personal look into his life.

After the dinner we went a local Baskin and Robins and got a couple ice cream cones. The contest people had somehow managed to get them to close early so that there wouldn't be a potential incident with fans when we arrived. There was a sign on the door that said it was closed for maintenance. That was where the date ended. The next day, both the Pine Club and Baskin and Robins got their publicity, because there was a front page story in the *Dayton Daily News* with pictures of us in both spots. That's was probably part of the deal.

When we said goodbye, we hugged and he did kiss me goodnight, but it was on the cheek, and he was clearly self-conscious about it. I don't think a little peck on the mouth would have been prohibited, but I think my mom and his aunt standing there probably kept that from happening. I know I was self-conscious, myself, about them being there.

But all in all, despite some of the bizarreness (like the photographer), it was a wonderful night.

The next day at lunch, a news reporter from WLWD came to my school and interviewed me about the date for the 6:00 and 11:00 news. For a while, I was the envy of most of the girls at my school.

Betty M., St. Louis, MO