

Robert L. “Bobby” Davis and banking were synonymous in Tuskegee and Macon County for nearly four decades. This changed on September 4, 2015 when Davis retired after 38 years in the banking industry.

His career chronicled the many changes that affected local banks. PNC Bank bought RBC Bank in 2012. Prior to this change in ownership, RBC purchased Alabama Exchange Bank (AEB) where Davis had worked full-time since 1978 and the place he was first employed in 1971 while still in high school.

He served as president and CEO of AEB beginning in 1986 and retired from PNC Bank as a vice president. A pillar in the community, Davis positively impacted the Tuskegee area throughout his banking tenure. “I put people in houses who otherwise would not have had them. I also put people in business. Our customers became very loyal to the bank and to me, as a result. I always thought working at the bank was a highly regarded and esteemed position.”

Davis grew up in historic Tuskegee where he attended the Chambliss Children’s House on the Tuskegee University (TU) campus. He attended high school at Boylan-Haven-Mather Academy in South Carolina. From there he had an appointment at the U.S. Military Academy in West Point, New York but left shortly after arriving and instead attended Auburn University where he played on the freshman basketball team. When the Auburn staff was fired Davis followed Tiger assistant coach Wes Bizilia to Troy State when Bizilia was named the Trojans’ head coach.

Davis said there was a lot of pressure for him to attend Tuskegee University but he chose other options. He earned his undergraduate degree at Troy and a master’s from Auburn in Business Administration.

When Davis joined AEB, he worked as a teller, bookkeeper and quasi-apprentice while building a relationship with Alan Parker, who had been with AEB since 1943 and whose career was winding down when Davis arrived on the scene. “He was one heck of a mentor for me,” Davis said. When Parker retired, he advocated for Davis to become president of AEB. “I think we had the same community-minded banking philosophy — do what you can, but don’t try to do what you can’t. Do what you can with the community’s best interests at heart. That’s true for banking or in any other endeavor. That’s what his banking philosophy was and that’s mine,” Davis explained. “When he anointed me as his successor, the transition was easy.”

AEB Helped a lot businesses and aspiring homeowners, according to Davis, who comments on the lack of building activity. “It upsets me to drive around Tuskegee now and there are no single houses under construction. That really bothers me. The housing industry has become stagnant. A lot of professional people who could be residing here are living somewhere else.”

In addition to his banking impact on the community, he also has contributed through community service. His credentials include president of the Tuskegee Area Chamber of Commerce (TACC) for six years, vice president of the Macon County Economic Development Authority (MCEDA) and chairman of the Annual Carver Festival.

Re-elected in 2017, he is serving his **third term** as TACC treasurer.

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