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# Memphis Flyer

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OPINION » EDITORIAL

April 01, 2010

## Charlie Vergos

by [FLYER STAFF](#)

"Vance Lauderdale," who for years in the *Flyer* and in our sister publication, *Memphis* magazine, has served as the ultimate chronicler of Memphis institutions, put it succinctly on Sunday: "Charlie Vergos, who turned a cluttered

barbecue restaurant tucked away in a downtown alley into a Memphis — no, I'd say a national — institution, passed away this week."

Just how national was indicated by the attention paid this innovative restaurateur after his passing — in *The New York Times*, for example, which eulogized the late barbecue king, the child of Greek immigrants, as the inventor and perfecter of the "dry rub" style of barbecue and as an entrepreneur par excellence, whose delectable wares made the Rendezvous Restaurant truly world-famous.

Many are the celebrities who have insisted on a stop by the Rendezvous over the years to munch down on some dry ribs, and many, too, are the venues and occasions, at home and abroad, to which Rendezvous ribs and barbecue sandwiches have been transported by special request.

Many, too, we would hazard, are the deals that were consummated during the Rendezvous' famous Friday lunch hour, and we know for sure of couples whose resolve to tie the knot was enhanced by comfortable evenings in the subterranean confines of the original Rendezvous in the alley called November 6, 1934, as well as in the current building in another alley a block away.

What was unique about the personable Mr. Vergos is that his best memorials are not in granite or in print but are served daily and can be savored in present tense as well as in memory. He will be missed.

### On Public Decorum

Given the possibility that a political race or two this year may further exacerbate tensions that already exist in the community at large, we subscribe to a sentiment expressed in Monday's unusually contentious public meeting of the Shelby County Commission by Commissioner Steve Mulroy, who took note of "the tone of the debate" during a heated discussion concerning the potential sale of surplus property on Lamar Avenue. "On all sides of the debate, people have been getting nasty," Mulroy said, "I'm going to ask that we just stick to the merits."

In reality, Mulroy understated the case. Monday's acrimony stemmed largely from undercurrents of racial sensitivity which were made overt by Commissioner Henri Brooks, an African-American member who sees herself as a champion of her community, and may well be. However, Brooks' suspicions regarding race-based double-dealing in the property matter and another matter, that of the availability of preparedness training, were exaggerated in our view.

Insensitivity and over-sensitivity are two edges of the same sword, of course, and undoubtedly the best way of avoiding both, on the commission and on the equally volatile City Council, is indeed to "just stick to the merits" of an argument.

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As truly wonderful as "just stick to the merits of an argument" sounds, you are talking about the city council and county commission. The "merits" that they look for in any argument are far different than the ones we the public look at.

Posted by [mad\\_merc](#) on April 1, 2010 at 8:17 AM | [Report this comment](#)

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