

Episode 3



Anyone who grew up as my family did goin' "down to the river", enjoys a memory of Joyner's Restaurant. There's nothing like it today on the Lake.

At the Buster Boyd Bridge folks from all walks of life passed through that front door or stepped on to that boat dock. The hamburgers or cheeseburgers were the best to be had. And patrons, truly from all walks of life, were equilized in bathing suits, cutoffs, or motorcycle attire. The trappings of their "normal" self left at home. We were all the same at "Joyner's" on the Lake.

History:

In the late nineteen twenties William F. Joyner moved his small business, building and all, down Highway 49 from Highway 160 and began selling bait, sandwiches and later gas to the fishermen who would "motor up" to the one-room store by boat. This was the first gas sold on the Lake. There was the bait shop and soon a hotdog stand appeared in a screened 20 x 20 building adjacent. This is where "Joyner's Restaurant" began. Mr. Joyner, Sr. died in 1953. His son William (Bill) Joyner, Jr. and his bride, Georgia, took over the business.



Through the years the restaurant grew and evolved until in about 1958 the Joyner's Restaurant was built that we knew through the 60s, 70s and until it closed in 1985. This building was right on the waterfront; almost, but not quite, over the Lake.

In my mind the nineteen sixties and seventies were the "hey day" of the Restaurant. Ms. Joyner (born Georgia Kaperonis) was running the place as only a person of Greek heritage could do. Soon their four kids were helping with the chores; from pumping gas to frying burgers; each could do the job. Johnny, Paul, Mike and Penny are all very successful in their careers today. I'm sure the work ethic instilled by their mother helped them to the high levels of success each has attained.

THE TWO FACES OF JOYNER'S...

An Evening at Joyner's - Late 60s - 70s:

The live piano music was for the couples in the darkened corners of the big room listening to the Don Reitan Quintet, enjoying Coquilles Ste. Jacques and wine. This could be one of the most romantic places anywhere around Charlotte. There were big floor to ceiling windows that looked for a mile or more up the river.



A Sunday Afternoon - same period:

200 Harley drivin', serious bikers flood the parking lot, beer and babes in hand. For clothes it was less is more. Club association could be noted from tattoos, no need for "colors". There was live music on the huge deck beside the Lake.

So you say "how could such different worlds abide together?" Well, two words - Mrs. Joyner. She was discreet with the "couples" in the shadows and stern with the hog riders. Nobody wanted to be the one to cause trouble. So no one did. I saw Georgia step between two "pro wrestler" sized bikers, one Sunday afternoon, and watched them separate and disperse. It was astonishing to see this diminutive lady in that role, but that's how it was at Joyner's. Anyone was welcome - but you had to behave.



As I write this, summer of '07, a "phoenix" of sorts is about to rise from the ashes of the old restaurant, and I'm told that Mike Joyner is soon to announce a new restaurant venture there. Good luck to all.

But, there will never be a time or place to replicate this part of our shared experiences as Joyner's is but a memory and a pivotal part of the history of Lake Wylie.

Now the rest of the story. It was in a little "A frame" building located adjacent to the restaurant that I went out on my own into the waterfront real estate business in 1980. My Lake Homes was the first waterfront location and specialty real estate company on Lake Wylie.

(All Photos are courtesy of Mrs. Georgia Joyner).

Courtesy of Don Stephens
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