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Posted on a bulletin board beside my desk is a quote that I ran across near the end of my newspaper career. It reads: *Stop complaining about what you're not getting, and start creating what you want.* This one quote was part of the inspiration I needed to take the risk to start *Next Door Neighbors*.



Meredith Collins, Publisher

I mention this because when I edited the stories my talented writers submitted for this issue on Diversity, I couldn't help but think of this quote. The individuals we have highlighted in these pages have come from different backgrounds and cultures. They have had their own unique life experiences. Yet they are also alike in that the opportunities and challenges they faced on the path to who they are today resulted in moving their minds and their hearts in a positive direction; the familial relationships they drew on for support and inspiration were powerful influences as well.

Despite the apparent differences of those we interviewed, I couldn't help but think that, in some ways, they are similar. What has made them who they are today seems to have come from within them - character traits that were forged over time and through the pursuit of the ideals that were most important to them.

When I read these stories I found myself learning about people who wanted more for their lives and found ways to create what they wanted. I think that just might be the human spirit at work. Who knows? Maybe we are not so different after all. NDN

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commercial
industrial
architectural
portrait

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The Boy Who Sold Ice Cream

STEVE DOKOS LEARNED THE VALUE OF A DAY'S WORK AS A BOY THAT HELPED BUILD THE FOUNDATION OF HIS SUCCESS AS A MAN

By Linda Landreth Phelps



Lisa W. Cumming Photography

On November 24th, 1919, a baby boy was born in a Chicago suburb to Greek immigrants, Ioannis and Angeliki Dokos. They christened him Sophocles, a name he shares with the classical Greek playwright. The 1920s and '30s were a challenging time to raise a family, but the Dokos household managed to thrive by their combined efforts and emphasis on education.

“My father worked as a barber six days a week, but the seventh day was always reserved for attending church and the education of his children,” Sophocles (who is now known as Steve to most) shares.

“Every Sunday afternoon until I was grown,

my brother Dimitri and I would visit Chicago’s great public art museums with our father.”

They took advantage of the many free exhibits and saw works on display by the greatest artists of their time. Steve remembers exciting

examples of Picasso’s Blue Period hung when they were so new that the paint was barely dry.

“He took us to aquariums and museums, and as we did, my father, who spoke no English when he came to America and went to night school as a young man, discussed mathematics and philosophy with us.” These seeds planted by Ioannis Dokos would bear abundant fruit in the century to come.

“It was the Depression,” Steve recalls of his childhood, “and like a lot of people at the time we were on relief. Dimitri and I would peddle ice cream bars from a pushcart all day in the summer heat; we were so proud to be able to

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bring a dollar apiece home to our mother. My father was earning about \$15 a week at this time, and our family needed every penny to make ends meet."

When Steve was 15, he found employment as an apprentice tool-maker for a brilliant inventor, Oscar Moore. His afternoons after school and all day Saturday were devoted to his job, but Steve still managed to be a top student. Mr. Moore, impressed by Steve's work and intelligence, offered to help finance Steve's higher education by matching every 50 cents his mother could scrimp from the wages Steve contributed to the family.

"I knew we needed every penny I earned, so I was reluctant to tell my mother about Mr. Moore's offer, but to my surprise, she accepted immediately," he says. "That was the only way I managed to afford to go to college."

Steve's educational career was launched, and he graduated from the Illinois Institute of Technology in 1943. He eventually went on to pursue a Ph.D. in Engineering and Applied Mathematics. During the course of his long career in the technical field, Steve would take his place in Who's Who in America as the 1940's authority on the "Stick/Slip Phenomenon" of friction. Among other things, he worked for Westinghouse® Research Laboratories, supervised scientists studying effects of the atom bomb, designed sewing machines, and spent 20 years developing a complete line of home appliances for Sunbeam® Corporation, including the Lady Sunbeam®, the first electric shaver made exclusively for women.

"That product alone brought in 7 to 10 million dollars a year. Of course, because I was working for Sunbeam, my name wasn't on the patent, even though it was my concept and design," Steve says. Perhaps this helped stir him to leave the technical field and become an independent businessman.

Always a visionary, one day Steve walked across the street from the Sunbeam® headquarters in Oak Brook, IL to the McDonald's® corporate office.

"I asked to be considered for a franchise," Steve says. "They offered me the entire state of Kansas. Looking back on it now, that would have been a smart business move, but I really didn't want to live in Kansas, so I went with one in Roanoke, VA." Steve returned to his boyhood roots as a vendor of fast food.

Eventually, Steve owned a chain of eleven McDonald's® restaurants that stretched from Roanoke to Norfolk, VA. He was also named a trustee of the corporation's engineering department, helping to design several appliances for their kitchens. In 1985, Steve sold the restaurants and began working on his own concepts. He opened Cheers in Newport News, soon followed by the casually elegant Seasons Restaurant and Tavern and the attached Stephanos' Pizza and Subs, located adjacent to Colonial Williamsburg on S. Henry Street. You can often find the amazing "Mr. D", now 90, and his lovely and warm wife, Geri, in their popular restaurant, greeting customers and keeping a finger on the pulse of business.

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Steve met Geri when she worked in the accounts office of one of his franchises.

“You were such a persistent flirt!” Geri remembers with a smile for her husband as they sit together in a booth at Seasons. “Every time I passed by, you’d say, ‘Hello, Beauty!’, and ask me out. I kept saying ‘No, thanks!’ until one day I finally went to lunch with you. The next thing I knew, I was fascinated and we were out dancing and having a wonderful time. People used to think we were professional ballroom dancers.”

Not until a year went by did Geri discover that the vigorous, dashing, dark-haired man courting her was actually several decades older than she was. Geri and Steve have now been together for 34 years and married for 30; their second and last son

was born when Steve was 65. Youthful longevity runs in the family genes. Steve’s grandmother in Greece lived to see her



Steve Dokos as a boy and a young man.

106th birthday. His father’s sister was 103 when she died, and his father lived well into

his late 80’s, long enough to be very proud of his children and their thriving families.

From the day of his arrival in America in 1908, Ioannis dreamed that his family would succeed in his newly adopted homeland. Steve, now sailing into the tenth decade of his adventurous life, has many blessings to look back on, and professes profound gratitude for the people who have made his success possible.

The Greek tragedian Sophocles died at a greatly advanced age in the winter of 406 B.C. If they were to meet today, according to this eulogy given the beloved playwright, it seems that these two Greeks would have much in common.

Blessed is Sophocles, who had a long life and was a man both happy and talented. NDN

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Lisa W. Cumming Photography

Anna

Loves to Cook for You.

By Meredith Collins

*T*here are thousands of miles between Williamsburg, VA and Carini, Sicily where, in 1945, Anna Liguria was born. Yet, within a few minutes of listening to Anna reflect on her early experiences, evidence of Sicilian accent still in her voice, one can imagine the beautiful, sun-baked Mediterranean Isle where she was raised.

Anna's father worked as a supervisor in the distribution of grain and coal during World War II and her mother stayed home to raise her,

and her brother and three sisters. As a youngster, Anna remembers a carefree life where the aroma of her mother's Italian cooking permeated their home and the cares of the world were far from her and her sibling's minds. In Carini, there were street vendors from whom her mom could buy the freshest of ingredients to make the family's meals. Anna pauses and smiles as she fondly remembers those early years.

"My life there was beautiful," Anna says. "I remember. I never had any problems. My

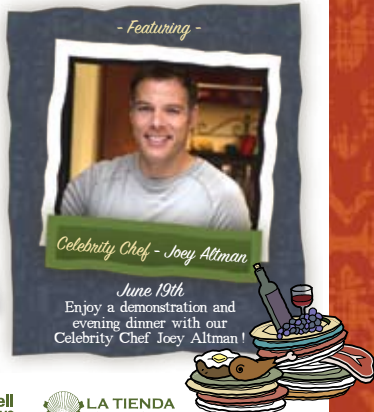
mama used to make the bread and we used to help her. We would make bread twice a week for the whole family. I used to nag her until she made me one piece of focaccia bread. Mom would say, 'I'm going to make you a faccia de vecchia.' It's called a face of an old lady. She used to put it like this [demonstrating with her hands] in the ashes. It's really hard, crunchy on the outside. It was soft on the inside but on the outside it was like a grey color and you cut it and you ate it with some olive oil and toma-

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toes.”

When the children were older, Anna’s mother worked as a seamstress. When she was old enough, Anna sewed as well, following in both her mother’s and grandmother’s footsteps.

“I used to make the coats and wedding dresses,” Anna says. “My older sister lived in Milan and I went to visit her and would work there also.”

When Anna was 19, her mother went to the United States to visit her son and grandchildren who were living there. Not long afterward, Anna followed, traveling aboard a ship called the Rafaela. It took eight days to reach her destination - Brooklyn, NY - where she reunited with her mother. Her father was not able to join them until almost a year later. Other family members including her sisters, aunts, and uncles gradually made the trip to New York.

“My mom started sewing in a clothing store in Brooklyn,” Anna says. “A lot of women back then, that’s what they did to make money.”

Anna did the same. She was a seamstress for less than a year when she became engaged to and later married, Salvatore Liguria, whom she met in Brooklyn. He was also from Carini, but they had not known one

“My life there [Carini, Sicily] was beautiful. I remember. I never had any problems.”

- Anna Liguria

another when they had lived there. Salvatore and Anna started a family and she continued to work. At that time her mother came to live with them and helped care for the children.

When the children were young, Salvatore found work in a restaurant - Pizza City on 42nd Street and 8th Avenue. Anna eventually went to work there also. The owners of the restaurant taught Anna how to keep the books, calculate payroll and to understand the restaurant business from behind the scenes. Eventually Anna also prepared food and worked directly with customers. This early comprehensive training laid the foundation for Anna’s business success when she would one day operate her own Italian restaurants in Williamsburg.

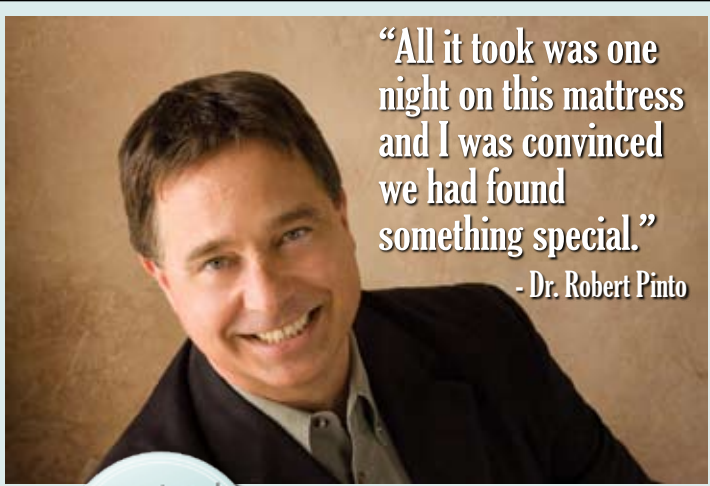
Several of Anna’s close family members were also in the restaurant business in the Brooklyn area.

“Eventually we migrated to the Hampton Roads area to open our own restaurants and to raise our children in a more rural environment,” Anna says. “My mother helped support the new restaurants that we started on the Peninsula.”

In the early 1970’s, they visited Williamsburg and decided it was an

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ideal location for an Italian restaurant as well.

"They were just visiting and she [Anna's mother] came here and she was like, 'Wow, I love this place. It's beautiful.' She had a vision of something here," Anna explains. "And we looked at Williamsburg Shopping Center. At the time S&J [Appliances] used to be there."

In 1974, when Anna was just 29 years old, she and her husband,

"We would have customers come in every week and we knew what their order was."

- Anna Liguria

Salvatore, opened Sal's Italian Restaurant on Richmond Road in Williamsburg. Eventually, several more restaurants followed as their Italian restaurant was a big hit with patrons.

"Williamsburg was a lot different place over 35 years ago," Anna says. "I remember seeing people with no shoes on. It was very rural then. And, of course, there was nothing going on here. If I counted the restaurants I could tell you which ones were here. I think there was a Shoney's. Olde Towne Pizza was owned by a Greek family. There were maybe ten restaurants then."

Anna and her husband saw the opportunity and began building their Italian restaurant business with the same tastes from Sicily that they knew and loved.

"Of course, here you cannot go to the street vendors the way you can in Sicily. There, you can pick your tomatoes. You go to the butcher and you buy everything. You can go anywhere, any time of the day and find fresh fruits, vegetables. Here we must order our ingredients," Anna explains.

Anna divorced Salvatore in 1989 but continued in the restaurant business. There were two other restaurants by this time - another Sal's Restaurant on Capitol Landing Road (still called Sal's Italian Restaurant but under different ownership) and one near Kingsmill (now called Maurizio's also under different ownership). Her restaurant in Williamsburg Shopping Center (now Sal's by Victor under different ownership) was her first restaurant in Williamsburg and the one that brings back many memories for her. It was popular with the locals for many years.

"We would have customers who came in every week and we knew what their order was," Anna says.

Jim Newman, owner of the *Colonial Guide*, used to visit the restaurant with his wife every Friday night for a large pepperoni pizza and a pitcher of beer.

"We used to come in here, when you first opened," Jim says smiling at

Anna as he spoke. "That was back when Austin, our little boy, was about six years old. He's 38 now. And we used to go over there on Friday night and try to drink all your beer. Remember that? My son would play with the little cars on the tables and roll them back and forth. We had a lot of fun."

Anna has many fond memories of her loyal customers from those days. Some, like Jim, still visit Anna's Brick Oven, their Richmond Road restaurant operated by two of her children, Annalisa Dill and Sal Liguria. What she misses most from those days, however, is impromptu tableside cooking. At her restaurant on Capitol Landing Road, Anna used to set up a little cart and cook for her patrons.

"I like to be able to cook," Anna says. "I would give my arm and leg to cook now. I would stock my cart with all of my ingredients and I would bring it around to tables and I would cook tableside, for couples, you know. I would buy a cheese, a hunk of cheese that is a couple hundred dollars, maybe more, to cook. And what I did, I scooped it all on the inside and then I would make fresh garlic and mushrooms and eggplant, sauté them, and then put it inside the cheese. It would have a beautiful flavor, you know. And then when I was tired, I'd say, 'Okay I'm tired, the chef is going to do the rest,'" Anna says, pausing. "I never dropped anything," she adds, smiling with pride.

Anna had planned to retire from the restaurant business almost ten years ago. She sold her Williamsburg restaurants and intended to rest. However, that did not last long. Within two years of her retirement, she opened Welcome South Restaurant in Toano which is still in operation

"I like to be able to cook.
I would give my arm and
leg to cook now."

- Anna Liguria

today. She is also active in an advisory role with Annalisa and Sal at Anna's Brick Oven.

From Sicily to New York to Williamsburg, Anna traveled and worked; accumulating a rich store of memories and authentic Italian specialties. She has made a lifetime of cooking for others and helping them to experience the tastes that she so loved as a little girl.

"When I divorced, I never remarried," Anna says. "I was married to the kitchen. Now I'm forced to retire, but I never wanted to. From a seamstress, I made a very good adjustment when I went to the pizza place [in Brooklyn]. I've always been happy in this. One thing this has taught me is that people are hungry. They always come. If you've got the best, they always come back." NDN

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Dick Ferris

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During my years of practicing Estate Planning law, this question often arises in my first consultation with a client - "Should I use a will based plan or a revocable living trust plan?" In other words, which approach is "RIGHT" for me and my family?

The answer depends on what you wish to achieve in your estate plan for yourself and your family. As I explain to clients, Estate Planning is much more than money or property. It's about people: spouses, children, grandchildren, favorite family members and close friends. It's about their security and prosperity without you.

It's also about state and federal taxes, including income, death and gift taxes. It, too, may be about your favorite charity and how you can remember it in a thoughtful way.

Estate planning is life planning. It is a living statement of your commitment to others. It is the ability to share your successes with others. Estate Planning allows you to achieve your goals, objectives, dreams, desires and hopes. It provides you the opportunity to control your assets during life and to make sure your inheritance is received by your loved ones, at the "right" time and in the "right" way.

Returning to the question, "Is the revocable living trust plan appropriate for me and my family?" Yes, if you have expressed the following wishes: (1) I want to control my property while I am alive. I want to take care of my loved ones and myself if I become disabled. (2) I would like to give my property to whom I want, in precisely the way I want. Further, I wish my beneficiaries to receive my property only when I wish them to receive it. (3) I want to save every last tax

dollar, both state and federal, and still accomplish my objectives. Oh yes, I also want to avoid, or at least reduce, legal fees and court costs. (4) Lastly, I don't want myself or my family involved in a lot of red tape that is public and prevents my objectives from being accomplished quickly and in an efficient and effective way. In short, these are the key benefits of a Revocable Living Trust: (1) Protects the Trustmaker, if disabled, from court appointed guardianships; (2) Allows Trustmaker to control decisions and assets during life; (3) Always can be changed; (4) Avoids probate expenses on assets in the trust; (5) Allows your estate plan and affairs to remain private at death; (6) Provides significant estate tax savings if properly established; (7) Very difficult to contest by disgruntled beneficiaries; (8) A comprehensive way to plan for Blended Families.

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For most families, the Revocable Living Trust is The Will Substitute That Has Come of Age. For a comprehensive article on Revocable Trusts and its tax benefits, go to our website at www.ferrisandassociates.com, click Online Library.

WENDY NILES

SHE'S INTO PUNK

AND LIVING IN WILLIAMSBURG



By Rachel Sapin

Lisa W. Cumming Photography

Every generation has that movement, that moment in time that is utterly thrilling to those that are caught in the thick of it, and somewhat terrifying to the rest of society. For the youth who grew up in the shadow of patchouli-imbued “Summer of Love” in the 1970s and 1980s, the by-then cliché hippie scene no longer provided the same creative outlet for societal rebellion. Then came punk. Krist Novoselic, the bass player for punk/grunge zeitgeist *Nirvana* explains of his drive toward punk music in his book, *Of Grunge &*

Government: Let's Fix This Broken Democracy!: “For me, punk wasn’t a fad; it offered meaning in a society that didn’t offer enough.”

Wendy Niles, Manager and Bartender of the Green Leafe in New Town, felt similarly attracted to the burgeoning punk movement as a teenager growing up in Newport News in the late 1980s.

“I just walked on a different path than most people,” explains Wendy of her decision to join an all-male punk band during her last year of high school. “I felt music, especially punk mu-

sic and the punk scene back in those days was just really cool. It was just underground.”

As the only female in an often male-dominated scene, Wendy held her ground as an important creative force in the band, learning the clarinet so that she could participate in her band’s instrumental sections in addition to singing. “We were playing a mixture of punk, metal and jazz music,” she remembers. “It was very obscure music.”

Wendy was involved in the punk scene when being “punk” didn’t just mean shopping at Hot

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Topic. As she puts it, "You actually had to go to the shows to get the t-shirt."

Punk in the late 1980s and early '90s, though growing, did not have the mainstream acceptance (and merchandising opportunities) that it does today.

"We were all misunderstood because of the way we looked and the music we listened to,"

"I just walked on a different path than most people."

- Wendy Niles

she says. "We were definitely outcasts. But there was a raw energy that was pure and passionate, and people were just putting their emotions right there on the table."

Punk's youthful culture - often accompanied by spiky hair, leather jackets and safety pins - was difficult for the band to pursue in Newport News, a city that like many cities in eastern Virginia was and still is largely structured around a military population.

In the early '90s, Wendy and her band

picked up and moved to San Francisco, the then-flourishing punk cultural hub. She joined the ranks of youth that were flooding the area at the time.

"Underground-wise, there was a big punk scene in the Bay area," remarks Wendy. "There was also a big jazz scene out there. There were just more art-intense, music-intense people

out West and we just wanted to try and explore something new and see if we could do okay on the West Coast."

Wendy's band absorbed the shock of San Francisco's no-reservations attitude immediately. The very first show that Wendy booked for the band was at a venue called 924 Gilman Street. It's now one of the longest running independent music venues in the U.S., but back then, it was simply a warehouse in Berkeley with a do-it-yourself attitude.

"The venue is for all ages underground punk music," explains Wendy. "It [the show] happened to be with this band called *Rancid*. Little did I know that we'd be opening for them. They had a pretty big following so there were a lot of other musician, promoters, and Indie record label owners there. Well, we blew them away because they had never heard of us. That one

show opened doors for us. We didn't even have a place to live yet and we were already getting offers to play again and put some music out on

vinyl."

Wendy's band did more than okay on the West Coast. In fact, she has a running list of punk icons her band played with during their time in the Bay area: from the genre-defying *Fugazi* to the decadently raunchy *Gwar* to the pop-punk mogul *Green Day*.

Despite their success, by 1995 their moment had ended, and the band split up. Wendy's own U.S. adventure, however, was far from over. She stayed in San Francisco even after her

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foray into punk music and continued to immerse herself in the city's artistic scene - picking up more tattoos and body-piercings along the way. If there's one thing that can be said about Wendy, she seems to have a Kerouacian spirit. From San Francisco, she picked up and moved from one vibrant American city to the next. She lived in Austin, TX for a while, absorbing the music scene there.

After Austin, she lived in New Orleans where she sold charms and talismans in a prominent voodoo shop. "We would sell anything from talismans to chicken and nutria feet. These opportunities basically came from me walking down the street and I guess, standing out energy-wise to someone. Sometimes things even came to me because of how I looked. I have a lot of tattoos," she says.

Wendy's tattoos are autobiographical in many ways. "My whole life has just been an exploration of good and evil, a sort of spiritual quest," she says. "I have a portrait of Jesus on the back of my right arm, and on the inside of my right arm I have a fallen angel. It's the duality of good and evil."

Of all the places she has been, Wendy never imagined she would make a home for herself in Williamsburg. "I moved out here fighting it," she says. "But I have a four-year old daughter. When she was a baby, my parents moved out here, and I just wanted to be closer to them. When you're a single parent, you need support."

As Wendy got to know the Williamsburg community, things started to change in her life, even improve. "It's crazy because you come here kicking and screaming, but then you slow down, because this town makes you slow down. Then you realize that this is a really nice, beautiful town. There's a bit [of] everything here: culture, history, nature. You still have some country left here. When I got hired at the Green Leafe, it just kind of changed my life."

Of all of the scenes that Wendy has been a part of, she finds the one in Williamsburg to be the most genuine and fulfilling. "There is a small scene that has my love for music here, but what's more important is that there's a general love for life here, and wanting to enjoy life, and

taking things day-by-day," she reflects.

"I enjoy the small-town feel of this town. It's a great place to raise my daughter. I've met so many different people here. The people that come into the Green Leafe to me are the best customers, friends, and associates that I've met."

If you're lucky enough to run into Wendy at the Green Leafe, she may share a few more stories about her rad days in San Francisco; she might even tell you the name of her old band, which still turns up with quite a few tribute sites if you search for it online.

Although these days, she most enjoys the time she gets to spend with her co-workers, family, and daughter, she's also proud of the journey she's taken to get to Williamsburg: a journey that led her anywhere from hanging out for a couple of weeks at the house of Pantera singer Phil Anselmos in San Francisco to selling actor Laurence Fishburne incense and a burner in the heart of New Orleans. Put simply: she's still punk in that admirably non-conformist, do-it-yourself way that makes being "punk" a timeless aspiration of the young. NDN



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An Advocate for Change



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Tammy Currie, William and Mary's Director of Equal Opportunity

By Lilliam Stevens

*I*m optimistic that as the world continues to change, we cannot sit still. We must change with it," says Tammy Currie, Director of Equal Opportunity at the College of William and Mary where she has spent the past sixteen years of her career.

Tammy has built not only her career – but her life – moving forward and also mentoring and serving as an advocate for friends, colleagues and students.

In the Office of Equal Opportunity, Tammy is responsible for enforcing federal regulations as they relate to workplace issues of discrimination and harassment. In addition, she oversees all faculty recruitment efforts to ensure that they are transparent and consistent and that the hiring process is inclusive and fair.

Tammy's style is to acquaint and educate rather than hand down directives.

"In order to stay in the game we must realize that we are in competition with people who are thinking ahead of us – thinking outside

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the box,” she says. “They are constantly diversifying their workforce. We have made strides across campus by educating people (on the importance of diversity), not dictating.”

Equal Opportunity, Tammy worked as one of the assistant directors in the College’s Office of Financial Aid.

Tammy’s work in the Office of Financial Aid

considered leaving or transferring to other universities, but didn’t. So that was positive.”

Ed Irish, Director of the Office of Financial Aid, agrees.

“I didn’t have a privileged childhood. But I was raised by grandparents who provided the kind of spiritual foundation that has served me my entire life.” - Tammy Currie

Tammy wants people to understand the importance of a diverse workforce.

“There is some very good research on this topic,” she says. “When you have a workforce where everyone looks alike, speaks the same language and thinks alike, creativity is going to be limited. This ultimately limits productivity.”

Her predecessor, Professor Susan Grover, says: “Tammy is deeply committed to the diversity mission, and she brings people together in the pursuit of that mission.”

Prior to her assignment in the Office of

provided the perfect opportunity to hone her interest and passion with respect to equality, although she didn’t realize it at the time.

“Things just fell into place. My work in Financial Aid was a great step towards giving back – or making sure the students had every opportunity to get an education,” she says. “Being a person of color in that office when there weren’t that many people of color at William and Mary – having an impact on students here – made a difference because it made students feel like they had someone supportive they could relate to. I know that some of them

issues,” he says.

Perhaps her own history and background provided the skills she needed to understand when people are going through difficult circumstances and help them rise above those circumstances.

“I pride myself on facing challenges because the stronger I am, the more I can motivate and influence others. I didn’t have a privileged childhood. But I was raised by grandparents who provided the kind of spiritual foundation that has served me my entire life,” she says.

Her grandmother, who was a missionary,

“Tammy had a very good rapport with many of the students she worked with and helped them through difficult financial and personal




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also taught Tammy to be strong and proud.

“There is so much pride for me – just in being a Black woman. There’s something really big about it – it’s difficult to put into words – but Black women possess a certain resiliency and resolve.”

Originally from North Carolina, Tammy saw education as her ticket.

“I attended North Carolina Central University, but placed my education on hold to get married, and then we moved to Japan,” she says. “When we moved back to the States, I had this itch that I couldn’t scratch until I had that piece of paper.”

It was important to Tammy that she complete her undergraduate education at a historically Black college or university. She did just that at Hampton University, with a degree in General Studies. Ultimately she went on to get her Master’s Degree in Human Resources Development from George Washington University.

“My undergrad degree rounded me out personally, but my graduate degree sealed the deal for me professionally,” Tammy says.

Tammy has been at William and Mary long enough to see tremendous strides being made on the diversity landscape and is optimistic that the college will continue to move forward in this regard, enriching the diversity of its faculty, students and staff.

“I’m not overly enthused about bringing people here if we’re not going to give them

what they need to thrive and contribute as a student or employee,” she says.

Tammy is confident that the college is making progress through education and a sincere devotion from other members of the college community who are committed to the cause.

In addition to her work duties, Tammy is active on a host of campus committees ranging from co-chairing The Forum (formerly known as the Black Faculty and Staff Forum), to serving on the College’s Diversity Committee. She also serves as the College’s Americans with

“We all have our struggles, but that’s what makes me appreciative of our differences and inspires me to help other people.”

- Tammy Currie

Disabilities Act (ADA) Coordinator with oversight for any complaints related to disabilities and making sure that people have reasonable accommodations. In addition, she chairs the Equal Opportunity Committee, which serves as an advisory group to that office.

“The Forum became a recognized vehicle for advancing the interests of the Black community at the college, expanding and strengthening the relationship and involvement of Black faculty and staff of the college within the greater college community,” she says. “In the last year or so, we have started to change the focus of The Forum – trying to rejuvenate its membership and redefine its purpose by concentrating on service and community. We separate these out – community *and* service – because we want to give back to the community but one of our

goals is to make connections with areas such as Admission to have an organized structure in place so that incoming students of color have a group with whom they can connect.”

Most recently, the group gathered at the Grove Christian Outreach Center to volunteer with food distribution to people in the community. Volunteering that way helps keep Tammy in touch with the communities within our community.

“I haven’t walked in your shoes and you haven’t walked in mine,” she says. “We all

have our struggles, but that’s what makes me appreciative of our differences and inspires me to help other people.”

As Tammy makes a conscious effort to be fair in her dealings with people across campus and throughout the community, she embraces each opportunity to make a difference and become a positive influence to those she serves. This is evident in the care she gives to employees and students as they reach out to her for guidance.

“If we could just accept that we are all human beings, perhaps then the color of our skin, our sexual orientation, or our social status won’t really matter, because we will then have a fair chance to be evaluated on the work we produce in the classroom and in the workplace,” Tammy says. NDN

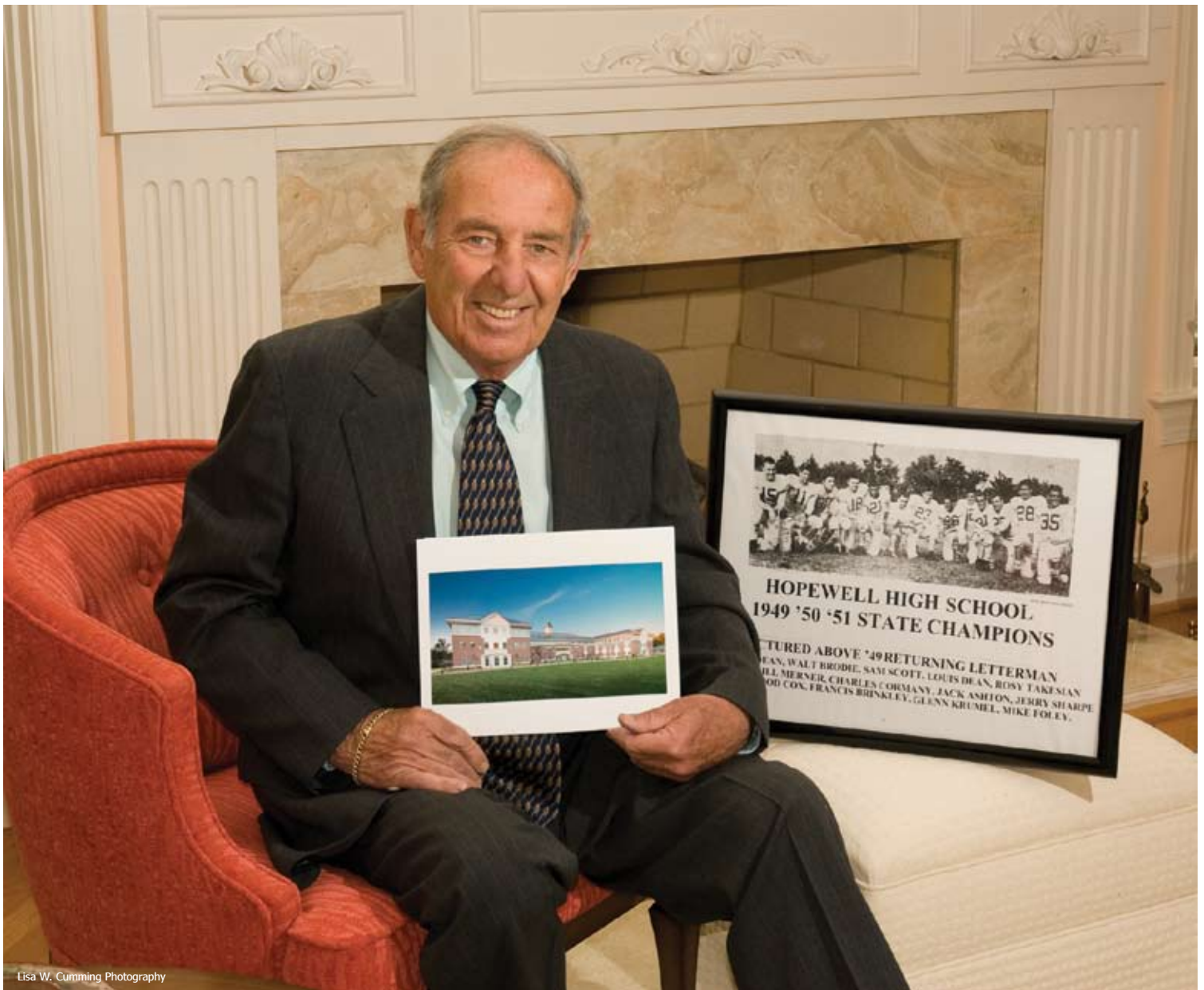
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ROSY TAKESIAN

A Life Appreciated

By Alison Johnson

*F*ortunate. That’s a word Roosevelt “Rosy” Takesian would pick to describe his life, even if it hasn’t always been easy. It’s also a feeling that his parents, both Armenian immigrants from Turkey, passed on to Rosy and his siblings from an early age.

Sarkis “Jack” Takesian and his wife, Arshalous Vosgerichian, felt fortunate for everything they had – the chance to live in America, the freedoms they and their children enjoyed and, more basically, the fact that they were alive

at all. Their parents were among the approximately 1.5 million Armenians killed in a mass slaughter by Ottoman Turks during World War I.

Arshalous was able to escape from Turkey when another family took her in at age 11 and raised her in France. Jack managed to get all the way to America, where he opened a confectionary store in Hopewell, VA.

When Arshalous was pregnant with Roosevelt, who goes by “Rosy,” her husband brought

her to the United States so their son would be an American citizen.

Like many families in Hopewell at the time, the Takesians struggled to make ends meet. And then, when Rosy was just 11, his father died of heart failure, leaving behind three children and a wife who spoke only broken English.

“I have often tried to imagine what my parents went through,” says Rosy, now 79 and a Williamsburg resident. “I have been to Ellis Island and walked the halls and seen the rooms

they had to go through for their different physical exams. I saw how hard my mother had to work. But she made me so patriotic to our country, so grateful that I was able to eat, work and walk the streets without the difficulties she and my father did when they were young.”

Not surprisingly, Rosy also believes in giving people from all backgrounds a chance to better their lives and, in turn, build a stronger community. That’s why he became a leader in Thomas Nelson Community College’s (TNCC) recent effort to expand its physical presence to the Williamsburg area. The new campus that opened this past fall in James City County is one of his proudest achievements.

“The philosophy of a community college is not to turn anybody away,” notes Rosy, a member of TNCC’s local board for 10 years and its current chair. “Professors become mentors and graduates tend to stay put. They become employees, homeowners and taxpayers.”

Hard work and mentorship have fueled Rosy throughout his life. After his father died, he had to become a breadwinner for his fam-

ily and help Arshalous keep the books for the family store. He took on paper routes, mowed lawns and collected metal cans and bottles to supplement their income. He was aware that his home was different: he spoke Armenian with his mother and feasted on goodies such as stuffed grape leaves. “We basically grew up on butter and olive oil,” he says. “My friends loved it.”

Rosy became a popular class leader at school and a gifted football player under Coach Tom Nugent. He also volunteered to raise the American flag outside school each morning and bring it down at the end of the day. “It gave me great pride to fold it in the proper way,” he remembers.

When Rosy was 14, he landed a summer job pulling nails out of lumber at an old hotel. When he got hot and thirsty, he would walk across the street to a telephone company’s local office to gulp down some water. Watching the sweaty teenager in action, the office employees saw something special.

“I was productive and polite because my

mother wouldn’t have it any other way,” he says. “The people at the phone company became mentors to me, knowing I did not have a father. They encouraged me to get my education – not to dream of being the best lineman but of being a manager.”

That company, Chesapeake & Potomac (C&P) Telephone, hired Rosy as a part-time janitor and trained him to be an installer and repairman. When he headed off to college on a partial football scholarship, first at the College of William and Mary and later at Virginia Tech, he continued to do part-time work for C&P. He then spent two years of service during the Korean War, most of it in Germany. He worked in the Army’s Signal Corps, which manages communications and information systems. Rosy finished his studies with a Business Degree from Virginia Tech and a Master’s Degree in Commerce from the University of Richmond.

C&P promptly hired the one-time janitor as a manager and Rosy went to work. During a 42-year career with the phone company, he

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and his wife, Jeannette, lived in several areas of Maryland and Virginia and raised four children. (They now are grandparents of six). Rosy also taught a business course at a community college in Maryland and served on the finance board of a second school, Howard Community College.

Childhood friends weren't surprised by his success. "Rosy's parents certainly brought their Armenian work ethic with them to this country, and it flows in his genes," says Walt Brodie, who first met Rosy at age 10 in Hopewell.

"At the same time, I believe he was and is a born leader. His energy runs on high-octane and he brings it to every activity he engages in – work or play. He is simply a 'take-charge' kind of person with confidence in his ability without displaying any pretention. He gets things done."

In 1997, Rosy and Jeannie moved into a home in Williamsburg's Port Anne neighborhood. Both Rosy and his wife of 53 years pride themselves on community involvement. Rosy supports the annual Virginia Shakespeare Festival in Williamsburg, and is active with the Or-

der of the White Jacket at William and Mary which gives out annual scholarships to deserving students. He is also a member of St. Bedes Catholic Church. Rosy is a big fan of William and Mary sports teams and enjoys attending any number of competitive events each year. He even volunteers to run the concession stand for the college's baseball team.

"Selling hot dogs, peanuts and popcorn – that's fun," he declares. "It brings back memories of my own high school days."

Rosy has never forgotten his roots. He's happy his children have taken the time to study Armenian culture and while he has never been to Turkey, he has visited Armenian communities in Boston and New York City.

"It gives me a chance to reflect on my parents' lives," he says.

As for what his parents would think of his life, and his fulfilling work in Williamsburg, he says this: "I know my mother would ask me, 'Do you feel good about it, and is what you do good?' I hope she would feel like the answer is 'yes'." NDN

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TIN NYI CREATES HIS FUTURE

By Ryan Jones



Lisa W. Cumming Photography

*W*hat do ancient Burmese traditions, California rice bowls, and a spark of creativity have in common?

They are all ingredients that have been simmering in the mind of veteran chef Tin Nyi for the past two years as he serves up his most rewarding culinary creation to date - the Gold Taste Sushi and Japanese Rice Bowl. This

small independently-owned restaurant located on the corner lot just past Martin's grocery store in Monticello Marketplace, is the proud creation of Tin, who has been living in Williamsburg since April of 1993. Tin enjoys the sense of freedom that comes with owning a small business.

"I have always wanted to make my own

restaurant," he says, smiling. "I like to create, and now I can do that."

Having spent much of his time since moving to the United States in areas known for rich culinary diversity such as New York City, coastal California, and southern Florida, Tin is able to bring a wealth of knowledge and experience to his business.

"I specialize in sushi and the rice bowl," he says, explaining his choice in naming his restaurant. "The rice bowl is not really here in this area much. You find them out in California and New York. I saw this Japanese franchise when I was out on the west coast - they had something like the rice bowl. I tried it and liked it. I thought it might be a good fit for this area."

Tin believes that increased awareness in the value of healthy eating has helped contribute to the overall success of Japanese food in the United States. "Japanese food

is very healthy," he says. "It's low in calories, low in cholesterol, and low in sodium and fat."

Among the most popular of the delicacies adopted by Americans from the far-eastern food culture is sushi, a dish typically comprised

of cooked rice seasoned with vinegar and topped with a variety of seafood (sometimes raw) or vegetables. Most people are familiar with Makizushi, a type of sushi that features the rice and seafood / vegetables rolled into a cylindrical shape and wrapped with nori, an edible seaweed. The rolls are typically eaten

with chopsticks and served with a mixture of wasabi and soy sauce for dipping.

"Many people think that sushi is originally from Japan, but it's not," Tin explains. "It's believed to have its origin from southeast Asia. Raw fish is mixed with rice and salt and put

in a jar. After a few weeks, it is very similar to sushi. Then you can eat it. It won't hurt you."

Though many are squeamish about the idea of eating raw fish and rice, Tin says that careful selection of high-quality ingredients make eating sushi an enjoyable experience for most people.

"In Burma, we believe in fortune. It's all about timing. If you succeed, it was the right time. If you don't, maybe it wasn't the right time."

- Tin Nyi

"A sushi beginner needs to try the right one, like a California roll or vegetable roll - then you can work your way up to raw fish," he says. "You dip the sushi in the Wasabi sauce for 10 to 15 seconds to add just the right flavor. It's like cooking - if you leave it in the sauce for the

Stephen J. Shonka Recognized As A Top Financial Advisor By LPL Financial

Stephen J. Shonka, an independent financial advisor at Stephen Shonka Family Retirement Planning & Wealth Management in Williamsburg, VA, today announced that he was recognized as a top financial advisor and named to the LPL Financial Chairman's Council. This distinction is based on a ranking of all registered advisors supported by LPL Financial, the nation's largest independent broker-dealer*, and is awarded to less than two percent of the firm's 12,027 advisors nationwide.

"We congratulate Stephen J. Shonka for achieving this prestigious recognition, which is based on how successful advisors are in growing their businesses by delivering the services and solutions their clients need," said Bill Dwyer, President of National Sales and Marketing for LPL Financial. *"Members of the Chairman's Council are among the premier financial advisors in our industry. They serve as trusted resources and counselors for their clients and their communities."*

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right time, it's good. If not, it's overdone."

While Tin is enjoying entrepreneurship in Williamsburg, he says that he has not always lived in a place that allows such freedom of expression. His native country of Burma has been under the rule of a strict socialist government since 1962 when the democratic government was overthrown by a military coup. Since then, the once thriving economy of Burma has dwindled to a level of poverty.

"Burma has a lot of resources, but not a lot of technique," Tin says. "I love my country so I would like to see it become more like the United States."

Though progress has been made, the country still remains impoverished while operating in the midst of plentiful resources. Despite the controversy surrounding the government, Burma's natural beauty is an attraction to many tourists, who have been visiting the country in increasing numbers.

"It's a beautiful country," says Tin. "There are three seasons there: summer, winter, and the rainy season. Summertime is hot - over a hundred degrees. The upper Burma mountains get cold in the winter, but the middle of the country stays warm. During the rainy season, it doesn't stop raining - sometimes for up to ten days."

As the last-born of one brother and two sisters, Tin is the only one in his family who has chosen to leave his homeland. "I still talk to my mother every couple of weeks," he says, smiling. "If I get caught up in the restaurant and forget to call, my phone will ring and she will ask me where I have been. She is the greatest mom in the world and I love her and miss her. I left home thirteen years ago."

After living in New York City during his initial introduction to the United States, Tin settled in Williamsburg to enjoy a more relaxed pace of life. "The city is alright. It's sometimes good and sometimes bad," he says, remembering his short stay in the Big Apple. "I like that you don't need a car - you can just take the subway everywhere. But everyone goes their own way. They don't really care for each other.

Williamsburg is quiet....except in the summertime. Lots of trees. I like the weather - not too hot, not too cold. Not a lot of crime. It's a 'people know you' kind of hometown - that's why I like living here."

Though he has taken advantage of opportunities to visit historic points of interest like the Jamestown Settlement, Tin laments that he hasn't had time to frequent all of the local attractions here in Williamsburg. "I've never been to Busch Gardens!" he reveals, chuckling as he recounts the time and energy involved in running his restaurant.

A couple of guests soon open the front door of the Gold Taste Sushi and Japanese Bowl and approach the counter for service. Tin dons his sushi hat and adopts an expression of quiet confidence as he begins preparing their order. Soft jazz music plays in the background as ten years of experience preparing the traditional Asian delicacy are called into service. With all of the work involved in starting and maintaining a new business, one wonders if Tin would recommend opening a restaurant to other aspiring entrepreneurs.

"You've got to try it," he says, smiling widely. "If you want to do it, you've got to try it. In Burma, we believe in fortune. It's all about timing. If you succeed, it was the right time. If you don't, maybe it wasn't the right time. I've been here for almost two years....can you believe it? But I'm still here. I opened my restaurant only one or two months before the economy dropped off, and I struggled. But I've got to fight. I am here to win, not to lose."

With ancient Burmese traditions and California rice bowls still simmering in the mix, it is likely that Tin's positive attitude and friendly demeanor will be the final ingredient that grants him the success he seeks as he follows a dream that began in the tropical climate of Burma and continues to progress in the heart of Williamsburg.

"I don't look back," Tin says with enthusiasm. "I look straight ahead. Whenever you make something like this, you just have to keep doing it." NDN

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