

The Country Squire To Continue Same Traditions Under New Owners

The Country Squire restaurant has been under the management of the Eakes Investment Corporation since October 12, 1982, when the establishment was purchased by Doris and Joe Eakes of Kure Beach. The restaurant will be operated by Kenneth Smith, a native of Duplin County.

The Eakes Corporation will take an absentee-ownership role in the Country Squire, leaving its management to Smith, who worked with the restaurant's former owner more than 20 months prior to the sale. Joe West opened the Country Squire August 5, 1961 and continued to operate the business until his health forced the sale of the establishment.

The Eakes Corporation owns a number of nursing homes across the state and within the past few years has purchased one of the chain of Big Daddy's restaurants located in Kure Beach. According to Smith, Country Squire manager, the Duplin restaurant was purchased because of its established reputation and success.

"Mr. West taught me the artistic value of fine food," Smith said. "I had been in the fast food services before coming to the Squire. No changes will be made under the new ownership. I plan to continue in the tradition in which Joe West founded the restaurant." Smith added structural changes have been made to the restaurant's kitchen and are improving the service offered customers by the waiters and waitresses.

staff consists of about 28 employees.

"I had a lot of inspiration from English literature," Joe West said. "Financially, I had to start very inexpensively, so I started (the restaurant) with the idea of early pioneers and the log cabin. And it grew into what it is today." Today the restaurant has grown from a beginning of 1,300 square feet and a seating capacity of 70 into several dining halls bearing names from English literature and serving 450 people.

"I tried to create something different from any other restaurant. Often it is hard to create something totally original, but you can always strive toward that goal." West explained his goal was to create a relaxed atmosphere which induced creativity and freedom of communication for its clientele. "You can eat food anywhere; however, people do want good food, but in this time and busy world, people do not have time to communicate and this type of place (Country Squire) gives them that opportunity."

The restaurant opened with West, a former science teacher, as chef. The occupation was self-taught, West explained. West enlisted the comments of his customers to establish the average tastes. He traveled to observe other chefs and read to gain knowledge of cooking. Today West prefers to make up his own recipes rather than follow a cookbook.

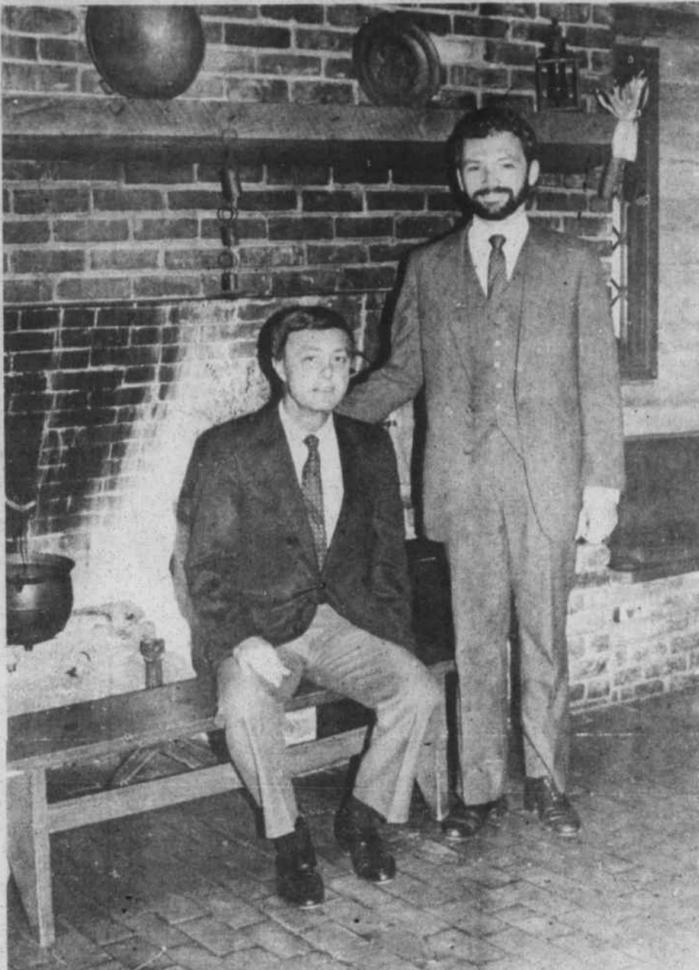
"We only had seating for 70 customers in the beginning," West explained. "I would cook and go out and talk with our customers and ask, what is a rare steak, a medium steak, and well-done steak. I would find about what the average tastes were."

"I don't know where the time went," West said. "It was like going to sleep and waking up today. I did not want to see the Country Squire go down, and I was not in sufficiently good health to manage the

business." The sale of the Country Squire was a hard decision and West spoke with confidence in the present ownership and

management to continue the established tradition of the Country Squire. West has undergone major cancer surgery and following radiation

treatments during the past few months. Still recovering, West has no plans to begin work in the area at this time.



COUNTRY SQUIRE TRADITION CONTINUES - The Country Squire restaurant was purchased by the Kure Beach-based Eakes Investment Corporation during October of 1982. The corporation will take an absentee ownership role in the management of the restaurant and has made only structural changes within the kitchen area. Kenneth Smith, the present manager and

former assistant to Joe West, the original owner of the restaurant, expressed plans to continue operating The Country Squire in the tradition made famous by its former owner. Pictured above, left to right, Joe West, former owner of The Country Squire, and present manager Kenneth Smith at the entrance of the restaurant.



JAMES KENAN NOMINEES TO GOVERNOR'S SCHOOL - The Governor's School of North Carolina is a summer program for gifted and talented high school students. This year high school students will participate in academic or cultural arts enrichment courses. James Kenan nominees are pictured, left to right, seated, Sonia Bell,

academic; Becky Frederick, academic; Cindy Faust, cultural; and Lisa Herring, cultural. Standing, left to right, Douglas Baker, cultural; Anthony Hall, academic; Janet Brock, cultural; and Carlton Smith, cultural. Not pictured is academic nominee Steve Harrell.

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