

Historic Eateries Continue to Draw Crowds

By KATHRYN McLAMB
Assistant City Editor

Franklin Street has been home to all kinds of restaurants that have come and gone over the years. But some eateries have overcome the toll of time to become important stops on the Carolina brick road.

These restaurants have become town traditions — students and alumni alike have developed a love for their atmosphere and cuisine.

Some of the eateries even boast of celebrities who have shown them a special fondness. "Michael Jordan, when he was playing for the Chicago Bulls and visited town, used to always get like 10 orders of the 'double gambler' and take them back with him," Rathskeller manager Carter Honeycutt said.

The Rathskeller has been open since 1948. Honeycutt said part of the restaurant's appeal was its consistency. "It's been the same for so many years, and it's going to be the same, no matter what the year," he said of the restaurant's sig-

nature lasagna. "They've been banging in here since we opened to get it."

Hector's has survived catastrophe to remain a part of the Franklin Street scene. "The original Hector's burned down in a fire in 1991," said Manager Michael McFann. "But the town wouldn't stand for no Hector's, that would be completely unacceptable."

Hector's, which opened in 1969, boasts an atmosphere based on what the employees enjoy.

"We are not part of a chain," McFann said. "So we don't have anyone looking over our shoulder, and we can have a little more freedom. We feel free to joke with customers who look like they have a good sense of humor and we can play music we enjoy instead of what corporate people demand."

The Carolina Coffee Shop, located at 138 E. Franklin St., has undergone renovations in the last year but has maintained its charm through the changes.

"We have a mellow atmosphere," day Manager Gerald Gaddy said. "The Carolina Coffee Shop tradition has

always been the same."

Gaddy said the coffee shop, which opened in 1922, saw a lot of former students return on big weekends like game days and family weekends. "People who graduated 30 years ago come back," he said. "They are talking about what has changed and what hasn't."

But some Franklin Street restaurants take a unique outlook on success. Linda's Bar and Grill, located at 203 E.


Franklin St., does not cater to any particular crowd. "We just open the door," said owner Larry Eldridge, who is also Linda's husband. "If they like it, they like it. If they don't, they don't."

This nonchalant attitude has actually earned Linda's, which has been open since 1976, a following over the years. That crowd has even followed them through the move from its former location on Columbia Street. "People who

graduated in the '80s come back," Eldridge said. "They know we are here."

But the consensus on what makes a successful restaurant on Franklin Street seems to focus on inexpensive, yet tasty food. The Rathskeller strives to be fast and cheap, but in a good way. "You can compare it to fast food, in a way," Honeycutt said. "But you leave very happy because you are full and it was inexpensive to get that way."

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