



# HISTORIC BRIGHTON

## Newsletter and Journal

*Exploring our Town's history and educating our community about Brighton's past.*

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Spring 2023

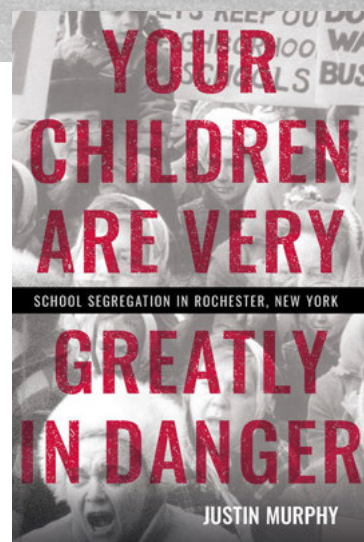
## Historic Brighton Spring Event:

### "The Urban/Suburban Program in Brighton Schools"

Historic Brighton welcomes you to a free program presented by **Justin Murphy** at **2:00 PM** on **Sunday May 21, 2023** at the **Brighton Town Hall Auditorium, 2300 Elmwood Ave**



*Democrat and Chronicle* education reporter Justin Murphy will discuss the findings in his book, *Your Children Are Very Greatly in Danger: School Segregation in Rochester, New York*. Drawing on never-before-seen archival documents as well as scores of new interviews, Murphy shows how discriminatory public policy and personal prejudice combined to create the racially segregated education system that exists in the Rochester area today. He will discuss efforts in the Brighton school district to find a solution to the problem of racial segregation.



*Cover Image: Brighton High School c. 1975, original source unknown [Gannett Newspapers cited]*

# MARGARET DINTRUFF HAMPSON: BRIGHTON'S FIRST POLICEWOMAN

Provided by Mary Jo Lanphear, Town of Brighton Historian

*Editor's note: In October 2022, Alison (Sandy) Burley contacted the Brighton Town Historian about her mother, Margaret (Maggie) Dintruff, the first Brighton policewoman. What follows is the oral history interview of Margaret by her granddaughter, Andrea Smith (daughter of Sandy Burley), for a college project in 2004.*

Brighton is where it all started for Maggie, a Westfall Road resident. She became the first part-time court clerk for Brighton in 1965<sup>i</sup>. The judge or his wife typically handled this position; when it became just too much work, they welcomed her help<sup>ii</sup>. Maggie spent about three years in the courtroom and quickly became familiar with various laws and legal procedures<sup>iii</sup>.

Around 1967, it became apparent that Brighton needed a female police officer to handle some sensitive and female-related cases. I asked Maggie what was going on at that time that made it necessary for Brighton to consider hiring a female police officer.

*"The Town of Brighton was a very progressive town and led the way in many instances. They had an exceptional school system and liked their reputation of being a good community and a safe place to live,"* Maggie explained.

*"I think it was that and a rise in women becoming involved in crimes - drugs, theft, alcohol-related incidents, fraudulent checks, and a need for contacts within the school system."*

Maggie expressed an interest in the

position, and with her legal background, was a good candidate. She thought back to when she took the Civil Service Exam and laughed, remembering how many of the questions pertained more to the Fire Department. I am sure she wasn't laughing when she was told she graduated first in her class of 30 students<sup>iv</sup>.

Maggie was assigned to the Detective and Youth Division, handling crimes against and involving women and juveniles. She wasn't hired to be a detective, but she investigated cases of fraud, murder, rape, and molestation.

*"As it turned out, the very first case I worked on was that of a nurse writing illegal prescriptions and stealing narcotics for her own use as an addict,"* Maggie said.

*"The 60's were a time of change,"* Maggie said. *"There were prison riots at Attica and racial riots with looting. Drugs were coming into their own and reaching into the middle school grades. It was a time of experimentation. There was also a certain amount of fear and worry about where we were heading. The youth of the day professed to love one another and they were trusting of everyone. However, it was a time of disrespect for authority and police were called 'pigs' and 'fuzz'."*

The job was 9 to 5, but Maggie was on call 24 hours a day, and not just for Brighton. Other agencies would get permission from her supervisor to "borrow" her when needed. With few other female officers in the area (two in the county department and seven



*Margaret Dintruff pictured in her police cruiser (from Town of Brighton website), shortly after joining the force*

in the nearby city department) Maggie was kept busy. She remembers being called in around 2:30 AM on several occasions after the bars had closed to search and interview females who had been arrested.

*"Being called in at night was to be expected and was just a part of the job. As soon as the phone would ring, I would sit up and head toward the closet to get dressed. They would have told me why I was needed, so on the way in I would have time to mentally prepare for what was ahead,"* Maggie explained.

Female officers were few in number and people weren't used to seeing a woman in the front seat of a squad car. Maggie wasn't even issued a uniform;

<sup>i</sup> Margaret Dintruff was the clerk for the Court of Special Sessions. The Court of Special Sessions is a court that is conducted outside normal sessions but is used from time to time to hear certain cases.

<sup>ii</sup> John J. Darcy and Thomas Hanna were the Brighton town justices in 1965.

<sup>iii</sup> Margaret Dintruff resigned from the court clerk's position on 3 May 1967. Her appointment as Brighton police officer was effective on 1 May 1967.

<sup>iv</sup> Not only did Margaret Dintruff ace her civil service exam, she and four other Brighton police officers completed a college training program in March 1971, earning them a \$250 per annum salary increase.



she had to put together her own - typically wearing a white shirt and blue pants or skirt. Even with no officially recognized uniform and petite frame (she was just over five feet tall), Maggie could intimidate. Two women waiting at a bus stop were shocked when they saw Maggie jump out of a police car with gun drawn, alongside her partner. The women ran down the street shouting, *"There's a woman with a gun!"* Maggie's partner, John Laraby, saw the women as they ran; Maggie had her back to them so Laraby filled her in on what she had missed. *"He also told me that the arrested suspect said, 'I'm sure glad the lady with the gun didn't get nervous,' "* Maggie said with a laugh.

Maggie's children could always talk to her as a mother and not as a police officer. But the uniform she wore, and the gun that she carried whenever she left the house, served as a reminder that she belonged to the public nearly as much as she belonged to her family. Many of her children's friends called her "Mom" because she was comforting and easy to talk to. Her children took some grief from classmates who knew their mother was an officer, but the kids who had encountered Maggie professionally had great respect for her.

One of the hardest things for Maggie to cope with was sitting in the hospital with a girl who had just been raped. She had to ask descriptive, often intrusive questions in hopes of identifying a suspect. It was not easy for her to watch women go through that pain.

*"You let the victim talk through it, if she would - some couldn't - and try to offer comfort, at the same time getting the information needed for an investigation. At that time, there was no rape crisis center and the general attitude*

*of many men was, 'she must have asked for it' so I would have to try to dispel that attitude,"* she explained.

A case that stood out for Maggie involved the discovery of a badly decomposed body in a field. An autopsy later revealed that it had been in the field for approximately eight months. Maggie recalled having to remove jewelry from the decomposed hand, and then going to lunch while the body was taken from the field. Apparently she was able to detach herself emotionally from that situation. She explained that it was almost automatic since the remains hardly resembled a person. She added that if it had not been there so long, or had it been a child, it would have been much more difficult. Maggie and John Laraby worked on this case almost exclusively, and ultimately the man was identified by his jewelry. Maggie reached out to the victims' mother and received some useful information, however, as of this writing, the case remains unsolved. Through a victim's services program, Maggie helped the victim's mother receive financial assistance. She always went the extra yard.

Maggie learned to look at the world with questioning eyes. She remembered a typical day when, on her way home to have lunch, she stopped at a jewelry store to buy a gift. While leaving the store, she saw two men walk into the store while another stayed in the car. It just didn't look right to her so she made a mental note and took down the license plate number. The next week, the store was robbed. Maggie was able to get a search warrant on the owner of the car she had seen there the week before. Sure enough, they were "known burglars with prior records." They were caught red-handed with the

stolen jewelry.

Over time, Maggie became very involved in furthering the training of officers. She developed and taught regular in-service programs for the department that covered new equipment, radar, breathalyzers, emergency management, and policy. Her career developed in the area of training and she joined the Criminal Justice Training Center as the In-Service Program Coordinator<sup>v</sup>.

Decades after her police experience, Maggie was asked what she felt was her greatest accomplishment. She toyed with the idea a bit, and settled on her answer, "Sitting back and seeing others apply what I taught them..." she said. Helping others is what all emergency personnel desire to accomplish, and Margaret Dintruff Hampson did just that<sup>vi</sup>.

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—HB—

*From Alison Burley: My parents divorced a few years (1971) after my mom became an officer. She later married Richard Lambrix, also a Brighton officer, and after their divorce, married Richard Hampson, a NYS Trooper. Margaret and Richard Hampson were together for 30 years prior to his passing.*



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<sup>v</sup> Margaret Lambrix's letter of resignation from the Brighton Police Department was effective 30 June 1973.

<sup>vi</sup> Margaret Hampson and her husband, Richard, retired to Flat Rock, North Carolina, in 1995. She died there on 9 October 2011.

# JOHN WASHBURN: A LEGACY OF AIDS EDUCATION

By Elizabeth Doty (with research provided by Marjorie Searl)

Many of us remember the book “Profiles in Courage” by President John F. Kennedy and his speechwriter Ted Sorensen. This work presents a series of short biographies that describe acts of bravery and integrity performed by eight United States senators. The profiles show “senators who defied the opinions of their party and constituents to do what they felt was right and suffered severe criticism and losses in popularity as a result.”<sup>i</sup> The list of senators examined included John Quincy Adams, Daniel Webster, Thomas Hart Benton, and Sam Houston.

In their epigraph, the writers quote the follow lines from the 18th century statesman and philosopher Edmund Burke: “He well knows what snares are spread about his path, from personal animosity...and possibly from popular delusion. But he has put to hazard his ease, his security, his interest, his power, even his...popularity.”<sup>ii</sup>

Thirty-five years ago, a Brighton resident, educator John Washburn, showed us his own “profile in courage” as a crusader for AIDS education in public schools. As it has turned out, despite Burke’s pronouncement, Washburn’s stature in our community has only increased.

John W. Washburn Jr. was born in Lexington, Oklahoma, a small town 35 miles south of Oklahoma City, and graduated from the local high school. He earned a bachelor’s degree in elementary education from Central State College in Edmond, Oklahoma, and began teaching elementary school in Westminster, California. He

developed his teaching and school administrative skills with positions in Germany, Lexington, Massachusetts, and the Harvard-Newton Summer Program. During this time in late 1960 and early 1970, Washburn completed a master’s degree and a doctorate from Harvard University.

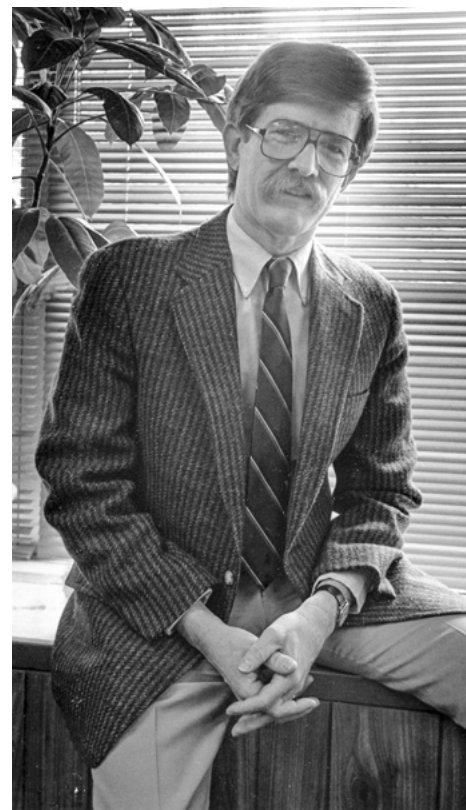
Before coming to Brighton in 1980, Washburn was the director of elementary education for eight years in Great Neck, Nassau County, one of the most highly regarded districts in New York State. Previously he had been principal of the Cunningham Community Elementary School in the Cherry Creek public school system in Englewood, Colorado.

## Achievements in Brighton

In his first year at Brighton, Washburn began reorganizing the school district to accommodate a shrinking school population. During his tenure of seven and a half years, he led the 3,000-student district through school reorganization and renovations, which included reorganizing the district’s grade configuration, and renovating the high school. In addition, he assembled a strong administrative staff, and reduced the number of teachers and administrators. Washburn also focused on academic strength by stressing early childhood education, providing young students with the educational tools to excel throughout school.

## Diagnosis of AIDS

In 1985, Washburn was diagnosed as having AIDS-related complex,



*Portrait of John Washburn, Superintendent of Brighton Schools, c. early 1980s*

an illness that often precedes full-blown acquired immune deficiency syndrome. In 1986, he sat down with his family – mother, brother, sister, and sister-in-law – and gave them the painful news that he had contracted AIDS. At that time, they knew that he was gay, but were terrified and uninformed about the disease. But with his determination to use his remaining time, and with the support of his family, Washburn began his battle for AIDS education in public schools.

In January of 1987, Washburn went on sick leave from his duties as Brighton Schools superintendent. In July of that year he resigned, reporting that he was suffering from a respiratory ailment that he developed a year ago. Initially, he wished to keep the

<sup>i</sup> Wikipedia entry for 1956 publication “Profiles in Courage” by John F. Kennedy and Ted Sorensen

<sup>ii</sup> Wikipedia entry for Edmund Burke

true nature of his illness private. But in December of 1987, he published a letter in the journal of Phi Delta Kappa, an international organization for professional educators. In this letter, Washburn began by introducing his background in education, briefly describing his twenty-five years as a classroom teacher, a principal, and a school superintendent. Then he delivered his shocking point – “I have AIDS.”

During the HIV/AIDS epidemic in the 1980s and early 1990s, homophobia rose and the fear of infection inflamed the attitudes of many people. At the start, the medical community struggled to discover the cause and to determine the most effective treatment for this disease, which was fatal at this time. As Washburn became sicker with many of the symptoms, he was determined to use his professional skills to advocate for classroom education to help students understand the importance of preventive sexual practices. In his letter he allowed that “there are enormous dilemmas involved in dealing with AIDS in the school setting—moral issues, ethical considerations, legal dilemmas, and the issue of whose responsibility it is anyway for teaching about AIDS.”<sup>iii</sup>

Additionally, he agreed that although teaching children about AIDS is a parental responsibility, schools act in loco parentis. Washburn urged educators to “take the lead to inform the national debate, to inform our own practice, and to inform and instruct our students.”<sup>iv</sup> At the end of the letter, he reminded his fellow colleagues that “many have recovered from a lack of formal knowledge, but none have recovered from AIDS. Please decide to make a difference.”<sup>v</sup>

On January 15th, 1988, the Democrat and Chronicle published both the Phi Delta Kappa letter and the response from the Rochester community. In the article, Jackie Nudd, a friend and the executive director of AIDS Rochester, stated: “John is probably one of the most courageous men I’ve ever met, and his decision to go public will make a big difference. We’ve had the Rock Hudson national figures. We’ve had Liberace and all of those. But when you can put a face on it in your own community, it makes a difference.” Dan Meyers, chairman of Helping People with AIDS, and a close friend of Washburn’s, said “A decision like this hits at the very essence of who you are and what your values are. So even a very bright and dedicated person can’t do this thing without a tremendous amount of soul-searching. It’s an emotional and spiritual decision and for that reason it deserves even more respect.” Meyers added: “Anyone who knows John well and shares respect and affection for him isn’t surprised by this. He’s a master teacher and he’s dedicated his life to the practice and to the philosophies of education. This is one more opportunity for him to take a leadership role and an important educational step.”

Dr. William Valenti, a friend and a specialist in infectious diseases at the University of Rochester who supervised his treatment, remarked that Washburn’s “willingness to serve as an advocate for AIDS education demonstrates that a forward-looking outlook is possible even in the face of deadly illness.” Dr. Valenti also pointed out, “Here’s a man who has a chronic illness who is looking to the future. His attitude is just such an inspiration to people.”<sup>vi</sup>

Adam Kaufman, a professional acquaintance and counsel to the City School District, added: “I think it will raise the awareness of students, not only those in Brighton, but the friends of kids who live in Brighton. There is an opportunity for families and teachers, based on John’s courage, to have needed conversation about AIDS.”<sup>vii</sup>

In February of 1988, Washburn traveled to Las Vegas to attend the American Association of School Administrators convention as a featured speaker. At a morning news conference at the Las Vegas Convention Center on February 20th, he said he had no regrets. “I can’t give up my gayness because it would be more palatable to mainstream America. But I can choose – and I have – to live a life of dignity and responsibility.”<sup>viii</sup>

Washburn was part of a national group of administrators who, with the help of Katherine Keough of Queens College, City University of New York, had conducted research on superintendent’s views about AIDS education. At the convention, the group announced the release of a new booklet, written by Professor Keough, recommending guidelines for teaching children about AIDS. The booklet, titled “Dealing with AIDS: Breaking the Chain of Infection”, was created to provide school superintendents and other administrators “with information for use in stimulating rational community discussion of the need for an AIDS education program, acceptance of the integration of such a program into the school district’s curriculum, and agreement on its content.”<sup>ix</sup>

<sup>iii-vii</sup> Democrat & Chronicle, 1 January 1988, p. 5

<sup>viii</sup> Democrat & Chronicle, 21 February 1988, p. 2

<sup>ix</sup> <https://www.ojp.gov/ncjrs/virtual-library/abstracts/dealing-aids-breaking-chain-infection>



In April of 1988, Washburn spoke at the State University of New York at Brockport, telling the students “You have a future. Don’t risk it because you’re horny or stoned or had too much to drink. Give it some thought.”<sup>x</sup> The next day he spoke at Monroe Community College, challenging the audience to join in educating others, and telling them “my heart is shattered by this diagnosis – no one else needs to get AIDS.”<sup>xi</sup> In total, Washburn made more than 25 public appearances in six states.

## Death

John Washburn died on Thursday, June 22, 1989 at his home in New Mexico, where he moved to live with his younger sister in the summer of 1988. Brighton High School’s Class

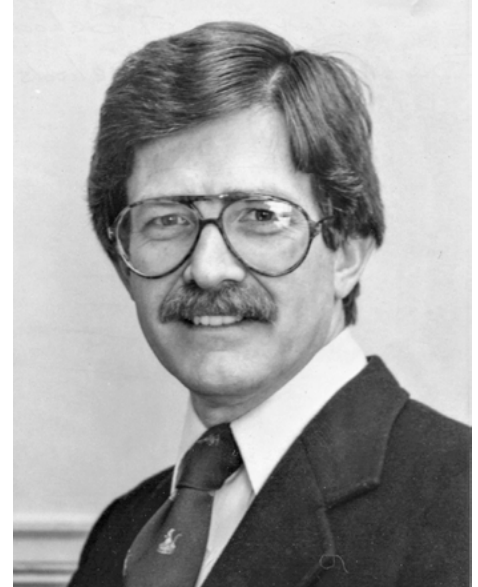
of 1988 established a scholarship in his honor, to be awarded to a graduating senior who exhibited compassion, concern for the underprivileged, and involvement in helping others. Dr. William Valenti, who treated Washburn, said “We really learned a lot from John.”<sup>xii</sup>

## Conclusion

The recent losses from the Covid 19 pandemic have again cruelly reminded us that our bodies are fragile and that we are mortal. But this pandemic was universal: all were vulnerable. The bravery of John Washburn shines because at the early onset of AIDS, it seemed that the disease specifically targeted gay men. By using his pulpit as an educator, and appearing before us with honesty, gravity, and intelligence,

Washburn became a local face of the humanity amid the AIDS epidemic, despite the tragedy of his death. As we approach this year’s Pride Month, let’s remember our local hero, John Washburn.

—HB—



<sup>ix</sup> <https://www.ojp.gov/ncjrs/virtual-library/abstracts/dealing-aids-breaking-chain-infection>

<sup>x</sup> Democrat and Chronicle, 16 April, 1988, p. 11

<sup>xi</sup> Democrat and Chronicle, 23 April 23, 1988, p. 14

<sup>xii</sup> Democrat and Chronicle, 24 June, 1988, p. 1

*Additional Source: PBS American Masters – Dr. Tony Fauci. Season 37, March 2023*

## HISTORIC BRIGHTON IS GRATEFUL FOR THE STEADFAST SUPPORT OF OUR MEMBERS AND FRIENDS

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# MERCHANTS OF MONROE - THE BROWN DERBY RESTAURANT

By Ray Tierney III

In the 1960s the community along Monroe Avenue witnessed many changes, and this installment of the Merchants of Monroe promises to capture some of that excitement. There was a restaurant located in a small plaza near Highland Ave that as of this writing is home to Max's Chophouse. I recently reconnected with my longtime friend Nate Cianciola who opened the Brown Derby Restaurant there in 1967. I thought that I knew Nate pretty well, but I was pleasantly surprised at what I didn't know and that makes this a special story.

After waiting many months for his liquor license, Nate opened the restaurant on Valentines Day assisted by his brother, Vincenzo, who would soon open his own restaurant. It wasn't long before the cozy restaurant was humming with activity. Pat Dougherty writing for her "Dining Out" column in the D&C summed it up perfectly: "Twelve years ago on a particularly busy Saturday night Nate switched off the lighted sign and closed the beige drapes to discourage further patronage that evening. He has never lighted the sign again and still closes the drapes after dark. So popular is the small storefront dining room (it seats fewer than 50 people) that it needs no such advertisements."<sup>i</sup>

It was during that 12-year period that several things happened that would define the restaurant and establish Nate's legacy. First was the refinement of the recipe for a specific dish, Veal French. According to the book "Frenching Food Italian Style" written by Nate in 2006, "[Nate] and Vincenzo created a unique approach to preparing the French sauce batter

originally used for veal." That recipe went on to win recognition from the International Wine and Food Society in the mid 1970's. As Nate was quoted in the D&C, on 5 June 2001, "It's a Rochester dish, we perfected it." This innovation was a result of Nate's approach to the culinary arts. He states in his book: "Originality is rare in the culinary arts, but an important asset for a chef. Creativity, imagination and a flare for cooking with herbs, spices and wines adds to the appearance and presentation. As the saying goes, most people eat with their eyes." He believed that cooking al dente (which translates to literally mean "to the tooth") fit that culinary term as menu items like pasta and vegetables were best served not mushy.

The mid 70's brought a watershed moment. As Nate tells it, he was hard at work one afternoon doing prep work for that evening when he heard a disruption in front of the restaurant. He went outside to find that he was the subject of a protest concerning the treatment of calves. He attempted to tell the protesters that he went out of his way to procure veal from Colorado that was raised free range. Not being able to make any headway, he returned inside discouraged. A short time later after commiserating with his brother, he decided to innovate his menu. As a substitute for those that chose to avoid veal, Nate decided to elevate a Chicken French appetizer to the main menu. It included a unique batter and style of French sauce originally used for veal and it caught on rapidly. Chicken French was just the beginning as "Frenching" appetizers and entrees became a staple at the Brown Derby. It wasn't long before other restaurants

were doing the same as they discovered that the batter used in Veal French lent itself well to modification. It wasn't long until "Frenching" was enhancing artichokes, fish, shrimp, lobster and eggplant. Talk about turning lemons into lemonade! Nate had clearly turned the protests into culinary innovation and success. He was even approached by Channel 13 about doing a cooking show, which he politely declined. The reasons given were that he was extraordinarily busy and was not convinced that anyone would watch it. As he related this to me, he now sees the ubiquitous cooking shows on cable and believes he would have been a hit!

Next up was the atmosphere Nate created as he sought to emulate what he experienced when he visited the original Brown Derby in Hollywood. The big derby hat gracing the outside drew people inside to marvel at the walls adorned with photos of many celebrities. The big red booths were planted indelibly into his mind as his restaurant would contain like versions. The great food and comfy 50-seat interior soon began to draw local professionals and national celebrities. . It was not unusual to see the rich and famous. Liberace made it a point to visit and occasionally played the piano nestled at the end of the bar. Other visitors were Harry Belafonte and Victor Borge. Rochester's own Chuck Mangione, Grammy Award-winning flugelhorn player and composer, was there so often that many thought that he was Nate's partner. Local musicians included Buddy Rich and Jeff Tyzik who was to become the future Pops conductor of the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra. Nate is particularly proud of the photo of

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<sup>i</sup> Democrat and Chronicle, 25 March, 1984

himself and his manager, Pam Adams Mostyn, with multiple Grammy award winning artist Bonnie Raitt. “Baby Boomer” television mainstay “Buffalo Bob” Smith of the Howdy Doody Show stopped by long enough to sign his photo “Love that veal, Nate.” Sports figures included Arnold Palmer and Carmen Basilio (who were regular guests).

Eventually celebrity status extended to Nate himself when he was invited to Palm Springs to cook a special dish for Frank Sinatra and his friends at Don Zangari’s Restaurant. He was additionally invited to Dominick’s in Rancho Mirage by Mr. Zangari to share his culinary talents. He also set up the menus for the Cafe Lido and Ambrosia that were hot spots in Newport Beach, California during the seventies and eighties for Joe and Shirley Sperrazza. While food and celebrity were

prominent in the Brown Derby’s thirty-year run, it’s clear that Nate is particularly proud of the people who helped make the place special. The opening staff included my friend and classmate, Lucky Lippa, who was the opening bar manager. His mother Carole (who was to be a long-time hostess) was there at the opening with her sister Mary Sarli. Others through the years included bartender Joe Bonnano, server Sue Drummy, sous chef Tom Brunelle and his aforementioned manager, Pamela Adams Mostyn. Nate’s brother, Chef Vincenzo Cianciola (although only on site for a short period), was a source of motivation and advice to Nate through the years. James, as he was called, went on to open numerous restaurants both in Rochester and in Florida. Most notably in Rochester he owned and operated the Port Side on Irondequoit Bay. It was there that Nate proved

instrumental when he suggested to James that he should hire jazz artists to perform in the dining room. Taking his brother’s advice, James went on to feature Joe Romano, who was considered Rochester’s own Charlie Parker.

It’s not often that so much comes from so little. A small restaurant tucked into a 1950’s strip plaza and its entrepreneurial owner have added much to the rich history of Monroe Ave. Nate Cianciola, owner of the Brown Derby Restaurant, rightfully takes his place as a true “Merchant of Monroe”.

—HB—

*Note: “Frenching Food Italian Style” is still available and comes complete with all Nate’s recipes. Many of them are named for family and friends. All photos and attachments are reprinted with permission.*



*Above: Natale (Nate) Cianciola, proprietor of the Brown Derby Restaurant*



*Top Middle (left to right): Chef Vincenzo Cianciola, Liberace, Nate Cianciola*



*Bottom Middle (left to right): Nate Cianciola, Lucky Lippa, Joe Sperrazza*



*Above: Nate Cianciola’s book “Frenching Food Italian Style” with his brother Chef Vincenzo featured on the cover*