

Leonard Goldstein made Roanoke's drive-in scene

By **SHAWNA MORRISON**
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Lendy's was the place to be in the 1960s.

You could meet up with your friends from Cave Spring and Patrick Henry high schools at the Franklin Road Lendy's, or your friends from William Fleming and Northside at the Williamson Road location. If you went to Andrew Lewis, you had to be seen at the Lee Highway Lendy's.

Whether you dined on a Brawny Lad steak sandwich or a Longfella ham sandwich, you knew to save room for a slice of fresh strawberry pie. You didn't even have to get out of your car. Lendy's offered curbside service and featured the area's



LEONARD
GOLDSTEIN
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first "curb girls."

Leonard Goldstein, the man behind Lendy's and several other Virginia restaurants, died Saturday night after a battle with cancer. He was 76.

His wife, Gladys, said the restaurant business meant the world to him.

"He was a builder, he was a connoisseur. All of the foods he made were original ideas,"

she said. "He loved to come up with new concepts for building restaurants, and he loved planning menus."

Goldstein had been a regular at a Big Boy restaurant when he lived in Cincinnati in 1953. He decided to open a restaurant of his own back home in Roanoke.

PLEASE SEE GOLDSTEIN/A4

Goldstein

Just two years later, he opened the first Big Boy franchise on the East Coast, a Shoney's restaurant on Apperson Drive in Salem. The restaurant was a hit.

In 1956, Goldstein added a menu item that made his restaurant even more successful. He had tasted Harlan Sanders' fried chicken in a restaurant in Livingston, Ky. He thought the Kentucky Fried Chicken was delicious. With the help of Roy Kinsey, Goldstein created the spinning bucket sign that is now featured atop KFC restaurants everywhere.

His business was booming, and he soon decided his restaurants needed a new name. He named them Lendy's, after his 2-year-old daughter.

Around 1960, Goldstein worked a deal with a local radio station to build a four-sided glass broadcast booth atop the Lee Highway Lendy's. From the booth, disc jockey Jivin' Jackson took requests and played music that was broadcast through speakers on the restaurant's teletrays.

"They would just pull in with their dates and eat in their cars," Gladys Goldstein said. "It used to be a cruising place."

Dot Toney of Moneta started her restaurant career as a waitress inside that Lee Highway Lendy's.

"Oh lord we were busy," Toney said. "We were so busy we didn't know which way to turn."

She said there were only 14 stools inside, but the parking lot was always packed.

"They loved their food, and that strawberry

pie," she said.

Toney next worked at the Lendy's on Franklin Road, which had a big dining room and still featured curbside service. Around 1961, she became manager of the downtown Lendy's, which was strictly an eat-in place. She served as the restaurant's manager for 14 years.

She credits Lendy's success to Goldstein's business sense. She said he checked on his restaurants daily and treated his employees fairly.

"He was a nice man to work for," she said. "He treated his female managers the same as his male managers."

Toney said it was rare during that time period for women to be paid as much as men, but Goldstein paid his managers the same.

Toney also credits the restaurant's success to the food Goldstein served. "All the sauces and everything, they made it," she said. "Breads, cole slaw, potato salad, pies, even the strawberry glaze. They ground their own hamburger, made it fresh every day."

Toney said Goldstein taught her how to run her own businesses, three restaurants that she closed because of her health in the 1980s, and Dot and Toney's Catering, which stayed open until 1994.

Goldstein eventually opened other restaurants throughout the state, including Richmond restaurants that featured Dine-A-Phone so customers could order their food from their tables.

Lendy's stopped offering curbside service in 1975 and closed altogether in 1980, but that didn't stop Goldstein.

He and his wife opened Bingo's sweet shop

on Apperson Drive. They sold cinnamon buns, pies, coconut cake and, of course, strawberry pie — all made from scratch by Leonard Goldstein and his assistant, Carolyn Martin. The shop stayed open until 1997, when the Goldsteins closed it to focus on Plantation Pride Foods, a specialty bread business they had opened in the old Lendy's commissary the same year they opened Bingo's.

There is one restaurant where Goldstein's original recipes can still be sampled. Pat's Cafe on Shenandoah Avenue in Roanoke sells many of the items that were featured on Lendy's menus.

Pat Dotson had started working for Goldstein as a teenaged potato peeler and onion ring maker in 1956. He left Lendy's in 1962 but returned to manage one of Goldstein's restaurants in 1973. He opened Pat's Cafe in 1980.

"I thought I could have some part in reliving that era, keeping the taste alive in foods that have never been successfully duplicated," Dotson told The Roanoke Times in 1984 in an article about Lendy's.

"He just loved the restaurant business," Gladys Goldstein said. "It was so important to him."

Plantation Pride Foods is still doing well, she said. The company bakes 35 of Goldstein's recipes, including salt rising bread. Gladys Goldstein said the bread is sold wholesale and served in local restaurants, including the New Yorker Delicatessen, Fast Freddy's and Bastian's BBQ.

"He was just really a man of history," Gladys Goldstein said of her husband. "He was a man of many talents."

Shawna Morrison can be reached at 981-3341 or shawna.morrison@roanoke.com.