



Gordy & Kathy Jarvis (Afton House Inn, Afton) Inducted into Minnesota Restaurant Association's Hospitality Hall of Fame

ST. PAUL, MN (November 30, 2009) – The Minnesota Restaurant Association has inducted Gordy and Kathy Jarvis of the Afton House Inn, Afton, into the Minnesota Hospitality Hall of Fame. This prestigious honor was awarded at the MRA's holiday party on November 23 at Jax Café, Minneapolis, by the Jarvis' sons, Dave and Dan.

Gordy and Kathy Jarvis were both born on the East side of St. Paul and were high school sweethearts at Harding High School. After high school, Gordy served in the armed forces then attended culinary training while Kathy worked at Gillette Children's Hospital.

Gordy has worked in the restaurant industry since the age of 12, starting out washing dishes at Rocco's Restaurant in St. Paul. He worked his way up through the ranks of line cook, meat cutter/butcher, banquet chef, assistant chef, head chef and General Manager at restaurants such as Rocco's, North Star Inn, Fort Snelling Club, McGuire's and the Twins & Midway Motor Inn.



Gordy & Kathy purchased the Afton House Inn restaurant in 1976 at the ages of 24 and 22, respectively. They renovated and expanded a once-dying business into a well-recognized community-driven restaurant and tourist destination. Built in 1867, the Afton House is the oldest operating hotel in the state of Minnesota. Today, the Afton House Inn offers two restaurants for fine and casual dining, meeting rooms, and 25 Jacuzzi and fireplace suites. The operation also features three dinner boats for cruises on the St. Croix River.

The Afton House Inn has received numerous awards over the years such as best romantic dining, best service, best wine list and best romantic hotel including honors in *City Pages*, *Minneapolis/St. Paul Magazine*, *Silver Spoon* and other publications. In 2002, the business was also named "Property of the Year" by the Minnesota Office of Tourism.

The Jarvis' believe their success has come from the ability to overcome odds and obstacles. While accepting the award, Gordy shared that years ago he was in debt and discouraged, sure that his business was not going to make it. A friend who believed in him offered him a loan of \$25,000. Little by little, he repaid the loan. "That's why I'm here today," Gordy said, "because a guy trusted me."

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In her remarks, Kathy said, "It's a great honor to get this award." She expressed thankfulness in being able to now operate the business alongside her sons and she also recognized the vendors who have helped support and grow their business over the years.

Gordy and Kathy have seen immense changes in the restaurant industry and point to increased diversity of cuisines, styles and settings, as well as fiercer competition. Kathy noted, "Our industry has also evolved with the changes in American families and lifestyles to meet the needs of fast-paced living."

Gordy added, "For over 33 years it has been and continues to be an absolute pleasure and joy to serve our guests for dining, lodging, weddings, anniversaries and many special occasions. Thank you to all who have shared in our legacy and believed in us."

[NOTE TO MEDIA: Click here for a high resolution photo of Gordy & Kathy Jarvis](#)

About the Minnesota Hospitality Hall of Fame

Inductees to the Minnesota Hospitality Hall of Fame are selected based upon the mark they've made in the hospitality industry, recognizing the legacy their influence will have on the business into the future. Previous inductees to the Minnesota Restaurant Association's "Hall of Fame" include:

- **2008:** Charles Pappas ~ Michaels Restaurant, Rochester
- **2007:** Bob Casper ~ Casper's Cherokee Sirloin Room, West St. Paul; Peter Mihajlov ~ Parasole Restaurant Holdings, Edina; Louis Tinucci, Jr. ~ Tinucci's Restaurant, Newport
- **2006:** Sam Ciresi, Sr. ~ Q Coffee Shop, St. Paul; Bill Naegele ~ Restaurants No Limit, Inc., Hopkins
- **2005:** David Fong ~ David Fong's, Bloomington; Sal Frederick ~ Happy Chef, Mankato; Bill Kozlak ~ Jax Café, Minneapolis; Jack Kozlak - Kozlak's Royal Oak Restaurant, Shoreview; Henry Kristal ~ Ember's America, St. Paul; Nick Mancini ~ Mancini's Char House & Lounge, St. Paul; Pat Murray ~ Murray's Restaurant, Minneapolis; and Reuben Palm ~ Palm Brothers/Strategic Equipment & Supply Corp., Minneapolis

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