

Landmark Shediac restaurant reopens after sitting closed for six years

LAURA BOOTH Times & Transcript

May 22, 2017

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On Saturday, Arnold Targett passed the keys over to the new owners and employees, from left: - Ronny Leger, kitchen manager and cook; Frank Leblanc co-owner and manager; Leonard Leger, co-owner; Arnold Targett, previous owner; Susan Leger co-owner; Jamie Dionne, cook; and Ashly Dionne, front counter.

Photo: SUBMITTED PHOTO

After sitting closed for six years, the landmark Shediac restaurant Targett's Chicken will reopen under a new name but once again serve-up its popular fried chicken.

By early June, the restaurant on Main Street will reopen as Lenny's Takeout - a family owned and operated business that will serve Targett's chicken along with fresh seafood, smoked meats and a homemade vegetarian burger.

"What I wanted to bring back to Shediac is that mom and pop type feel," said Frank LeBlanc, one of three owners of the soon-to-open restaurant "It's a great thing for us to revive that and bring it back to Shediac."

LeBlanc, of Dieppe, will manage the restaurant with co-owners Susan Leger and her father Leonard Leger. Ronald Leger - Leonard's son - will cook alongside LeBlanc's nephew Jamie Dionne. All of the owners and cooks have years of experience in the restaurant business, said LeBlanc.

The group had been looking to open a restaurant for a year but it wasn't until they looked to the old Targett's Chicken restaurant that they decided to commit.

"I think it's going to be very nostalgic for a lot of people," said LeBlanc, adding that the group purchased the original fried chicken recipe from Arnold Targett, the previous owner and founder.

"My mother and I used to go there quite often when I was a child so I've got a lot of great memories of Targett's Chicken."

Targett's Chicken operated from 1977 up until six years ago when Targett decided to retire.

Since then the restaurant, known for its giant fibreglass chicken statue on the front lawn, has remained closed.

"I still miss it," said Targett, 81, in an interview with the Times & Transcript. "After being in business that long, you know everyone by their first name."

Before Targett got into the fried chicken business in 1967 he owned an auto body shop in his hometown of Campbellton.

"It [was] not very healthy work," said Targett, of the auto body business. So he decided he would become a franchisee of a fried chicken restaurant in Shediac where his wife is from.

Three years in the fried chicken business proved so successful that Targett and his wife closed up the auto body shop and moved to Shediac permanently to work at the restaurant full time.

Then in 1977, Targett closed the franchise and reopened the restaurant under his own name, Targett's Chicken.

"I made my own recipe, made it myself," said Targett. "I threw away a lot of spice and a lot of chicken until I got the right one."

His secret spice recipe was so popular, restaurants in different cities reached out to him to buy the spice mix he had created.

"They came for the recipe and I wouldn't sell them the recipe, but I did sell them the spice," he said.

But this week, Targett feels good about handing over the secret recipe to the restaurant's new owners.

"I feel great about it because I think they're really good people and hard workers and knowledgeable about the business," he said. "That's what I was looking for."

Targett's chicken recipe will be the featured special at Lenny's Takeout, said LeBlanc.

"A lot of people really really enjoyed the chicken taste there so they're going to be coming back for the taste," he said.

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