



The Maine Event

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U.S. Route #1, Wells, Maine www.mainediner.com

Alive in Wells: The Spirit of Myles Henry Lives On at the Maine Diner

A year after his death, brother Dick and a dedicated staff stay committed to the Diner tradition!



Myles and Dick Henry

By Mary Raitt Jordan

Living in Maine we are tuned in to the transition of the seasons and the passage of time. We feel invigorated and alive with the first breath of air on a warm spring day; we know how to "make hay while the sun shines" in the short, hot interlude of our seaside summers;

we delight in the glorious explosion of a colorful fall and know how to make ready for the cold season ahead; and we keep the home fires burning during the long bitter winters. In essence, we learn to adapt to change and to be resourceful. It is part of who we are.

Last December, on the dawn of the holiday season, we were struck by a blow none of us could have anticipated...the untimely death of Myles Henry, our beloved co-owner of our Maine Diner. Nobody could believe it: a man so vibrant, so full of life, and such a believer in the power of possibility dying in the prime of his life. The reality struck cold and hard and numbed every nerve. His death seemed implausible after the amazing chart-topping year we had in 2010: accolades from earning our Maine Restaurateur of the Year Award; a featured segment on Food Network's TV program "Diner's, Drive-ins and Dives"; and featured slots serving up our home-cooked favorites at the prestigious New Orleans Roadfood and Boston's Phantom Gourmet Food Festivals. Decades of hard work and commitment were paying off. Along with Myles, an avid surfer, we were riding the crest of a high exuberant wave, and then plunged unexpectedly into grief and a sense of loss.

Like our Maine seasons, Myles' death was a transition for us. In the wake of his passing, there were some whispered rumors as many wondered would the Maine Diner go on? Was it for sale? Would life at the Maine Diner change, as we knew it?

For Dick Henry, the co-owner of the Maine Diner with his brother Myles, there was no question of giving up: the Maine Diner was –and is- here to stay.

"For my brother and I this was our dream. We devoted ourselves to our business and to serving the people here. Will it be the same without Myles? Of course not. But is the commitment here to move forward and serve our customers, community and employees in the spirit of what my brother and I envisioned?

Absolutely! We still have the focus and drive and will do the best we can, as we always have done. It is what my brother would have wanted, it is what he –and I- worked so hard to achieve in the past 28 years."

As a loving older brother Dick had a special fondness for his little brother Myles in the busy household of seven children. Myles and Dick grew up in a family of strong women, where both their mother Phoebe and grandmother Doris were fabulous and frugal cooks who taught them everything they knew about putting a hearty meal on the table, as well as how to treat people with respect and kindness.

While Myles may have been the first one to plunge into the food service industry, it wasn't long though before Myles' persuasive personality (which anyone who ever met him can attest to!) convinced brothers Dick and Bruce to join him on a business venture, which became the Maine Diner. The rest, as they say, is history: the Diner's success skyrocketed, servicing more than 5 million customers to date and counting, and it propelled this blue-and-white local landmark into the limelight with a slew of television and radio appearances, such as on NBC's Today Show among others.

For years Dick and Myles each had their separate strengths that complemented each other in different ways. Dick dutifully cooked on the line for 17 years, and while Myles cooked as well, his specialty was working the front of the house and he easily became a vocal champion of the Diner with his customers and a delight to the media.

"Myles had a magical way of touching the lives of everyone he met with his boundless vitality and the ability to see great potential in people. It was his gift," Dick said. "He was blessed with his one-of-a-kind personality. He could have been successful at anything he tried."

As a testimony to the deep love people felt for Myles, his funeral drew everyone from all walks of life: childhood friends from New Hampshire and Drake's Island here in Wells; fellow businesspeople and dear friends from all along Route 1; sports fans from everywhere; even members of the Rolling Stones Fan Club known as the Shidoobees. His calling hours lasted long into the night, with the rooms celebrating a life well-lived and a person well-loved. Adorning the walls were pictures of his friends, family, co-workers and the many of the passions in his life such as music, sports and surfing. A year later, people who knew and loved Myles still visit his Facebook Page regularly, and the wall is still reverberating with messages and thoughts, like he is still alive.

In fact, his spirit still is... here, at the Diner.

On the eve of the anniversary of his death on December 4th we would like to take the opportunity of honoring and remembering Myles. We also want to make it crystal clear that Dick Henry is committed to the family vision he and his brother set forth for the Maine Diner: to continue the tradition of serving up home-cooked food and hospitality that is uniquely the Maine Diner. In this issue you will see our featured employee Pat, who knew Myles as a bright young busboy learning the ropes of the business; you can try his favorite (and last) menu creation the Myles Henry Downeast Benedict; share in the special words from brother Dick, who will pilot the Maine Diner into future successful seasons; read about the living legacy of the Myles Henry Scholarship Fund at Wells High School, set up by his dear friend Vinny LoBello from Vinny's East Coast Grille; and you can delight in our news and happenings here at the Diner as you always have. While the seasons may change, our mission will always remain the same. To that end we are working on being a living, breathing legacy to a great man we all love and miss, but one who will never be forgotten. ♦