

History

The land where Normandie Farm Restaurant is located was originally the "Myers Farm." A country club was under construction on the site in the late 1920's but work was halted due to economic conditions of the time and the bank foreclosed on the project. In the spring of 1931, Marjory Hendricks, returning from cooking school in Normandy, France, passed by the property one afternoon and noticed a sign reading "For sale by mortgage holders." Within 45 minutes she had negotiated the purchase of what is known to this day as Normandie Farm Restaurant.

Together with her sister, Genevieve, this single mother decorated the A-frame building in distinctive and rustic French decor with scripted beams. The two rustic fireplaces were a major focal point. When the restaurant opened in May of 1931, one of the first clients was the Spanish Ambassador whose glowing report back to the "international crowd" brought them running in and the first traditions of Normandie Farm began. Among her best customers was First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt, who spent many an afternoon enjoying the famous popovers with her staff.

In 1941 the Hendricks sisters purchased the old Riverside Riding Academy at Water Gate in Washington, D.C. After renovating and decorating the building in a Pennsylvania Dutch decor, they opened the Water Gate Inn, known as the in-town branch of Normandie Farm. After the outbreak of World War II, Marjory closed Normandie Farm for the duration of the war and joined the American Red Cross where she served in New Zealand, Austria, and Italy. Upon her return to the United States, she reopened Normandie Farm which continued to be the restaurant of choice for society's elite and for families celebrating special occasions. In 1958 Marjory sold Normandie Farm to the James Speros family. James and his wife, with their two sons, George and Leo, continued the traditions and kept Normandie Farm a thriving restaurant. In the mid 1970's the Speros family lost their son, George, in a tragic small airplane accident. By 1979 the restaurant and the approximately 50 acres of land were sold. Normandie Farm was closed for two years while the property was upgraded with modern-day utilities and reopened in early 1982.

After a turbulent period, B&B Caterers purchased the restaurant and hired Cary Prokos as the executive chef. Cary, a graduate of the Culinary Institute of America in Hyde Park, N.Y., always dreamed of owning the restaurant and continuing the traditions that had been established by both the Hendricks sisters and the Speros family. In June of 1994 Cary got his chance from the retiring Carl Longley, the former owner of B&B Caterers. With Cary's ownership came a new commitment to re-establishing Normandie Farm as a leader in the Montgomery County community as well as the drive to guide the restaurant into the next millennium. Cary, and his wife, Margery, who holds a bachelor's degree in hotel and restaurant management from Virginia Tech, have shown their dedication to these goals in the many enhancements they have made to the restaurant as well as by the annual charity affairs hosted by the restaurant to benefit Montgomery County.