

LAKE NORMAN  
**CURRENTS**

Change has been constant around Lake Norman over the last five decades. And Nancy Hucks has had a front row seat for the transformation.

The Mooresville native has lived all but nine of her 64 years in Mooresville or Davidson. In 1952 her mother, Dora Blaine Little, opened a lunch counter in downtown Mooresville. The business served those who lived and worked in the downtown area with foods like hamburgers and hot dogs. Then in 1968, Dora and her husband, Claude, opened The Little Kitchen across from the old hospital on Statesville Road.

Hucks describes her family's restaurant as an upscale steakhouse. It quickly became known for two things.

"We served the best prime rib anywhere," she says. "We had homemade salad dressings. Those were my mother's recipes."

Hucks says those recipes were the work of a truly southern cook.

"It was just good country food; says Hucks, who is a Realtor with Lake Norman Realty in Davidson. "All of our recipes were homemade. Mother never had a mix. Everything was made from scratch. It was made from the best ingredients money could buy."

Locals made up a big chunk of the family's business. Hucks says they came to know the Littles for serving good food at a fair price. But as the region grew, so did the restaurant's reputation. Mooresville's Little Kitchen soon became a destination for hungry residents from Statesville, Concord and Kannapolis. Hucks says the restaurant was also very popular with Davidson College students.

The family moved the restaurant in 1974 and sold it in 1984. It closed a few years ago.

Over the years Hucks watched Mooresville and surrounding areas change from a series of small regional towns into a bustling community located a stone's throw from a major metropolitan area.



Before the creation of the lake, Hucks says towns like Mooresville and Davidson really didn't share a commonality.

"It used to be separate," she says. "Now we're all together. That's the biggest thing I see. If you were going to Davidson, that was 11 miles down the road. To go to Charlotte you had to go down Statesville Road. It took you forever."

As a Realtor the last 10 years Hucks has worked with clients who come to the lake in search of a lifestyle. She says she's been fortunate to capitalize on the region's growth — but also acknowledges it's created more congestion on area roads.

"I think there are pros and cons about all of it," she says. "But it's progress. And if you don't like progress, then you're not going to like living in Mooresville, Davidson, Lake Norman, Cornelius — anywhere. But there have been a lot of good things that have come out of the change."

*Scott Graf is a Cornelius-based broadcaster and freelance writer. A native of Iowa, he has lived in the Lake Norman area since 2006.*



Nancy Hucks and husband, Cliff, first re-created Dora Little's bleu cheese and thousand island dressings.

#### **A Family Tradition**

Nancy Hucks is carrying on her family's tradition of good food with a line of salad dressings just like those served at her family's Little Kitchen.

"Everybody said 'What are you going to do about those salad dressings that your mother made that you all were famous for?'" Hucks recalls.

So, Nancy and husband, Cliff, first re-created Dora Little's bleu cheese and thousand island dressings and soon the Kathryn's Cottage Kitchen brand was born. "The name Kathryn is a family name from my grandmother, myself and my daughter," says Hucks.

The couple also makes ranch dressing, chicken salad and several cheese spreads. The products are available for purchase in several local stores and on the Internet Hucks says they've shipped the products to places like New York and Florida, to customers who remember eating at her family's Mooresville steakhouse.

Nancy has also developed a new cookbook that features a number of her mother's recipes. The cookbook is called *A Southern Lady Cooks* and is for sale online. For more information, visit [www.kathyrncottagekitchen.com](http://www.kathyrncottagekitchen.com).

- Scott Graf