
BRAVISSIMO!

FALL ~ WINTER 2007 ~ 2008 · A NEWSLETTER FROM THE PENSACOLA OPERA

INSIDE



The Opera's center of operations gets a new look, thanks to many dedicated supporters



Who's been seen on the Opera Scene? Some candid shots of our favorite friends



*Local talent dresses up this season's performance of *The Magic Flute**

SPOTLIGHT: BILL MCGINNES

Nestled at the intersection of Hwy 59 and 6th Avenue in Gulf Shores, Alabama, sits Papa Rocco's, the "home of warm beer and lousy pizza"—and a man with a vision. Bill "Papa" McGinnes is the owner and operator of Papa Rocco's—and he is also an opera aficionado and supporter.

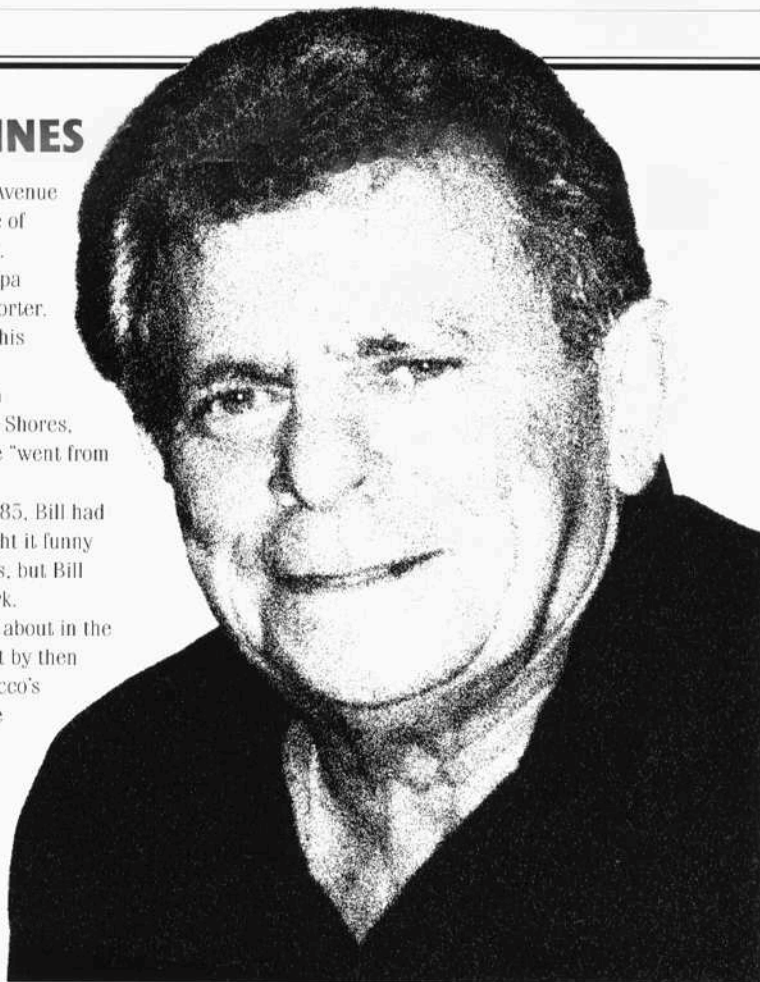
Born and raised in Glasgow, Scotland, Bill and his family moved to Detroit when he was 12 years old.

He worked as a tooling engineer for 22 years in Detroit before he decided to open a restaurant in Gulf Shores, his favorite vacation spot. Bill laughs when he says he "went from tooling up automobiles to tooling up pizza!"

When Papa Rocco's first opened in March of 1985, Bill had only about five items on the menu. Some people thought it funny that a restaurant would specialize in pizza and oysters, but Bill knew by the way they laughed that it was going to work.

The "Warm Beer and Lousy Pizza" slogan came about in the third year as a way to grab beach-goers' attention, but by then thousands of locals and tourists knew better. Papa Rocco's had become the place to go in Gulf Shores—it was the only place that served a full menu until midnight and the only nightspot with live entertainment seven nights a week.

Now Papa Rocco's walls are lined with pictures of local and national celebrities who have graced Papa with their presence—from Jack Jones from "The Love Boat", Mike Ditka, Wayne



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SPOTLIGHT ON BILL MCGINNES, *from page 1*

Newton, and Johnny Williams, lead singer of The Drifters, who sang at Papa's for over ten years.

Papa himself is a local legend. He has never taken more than a long weekend off a year in the 20-plus years he has been in operation, so he'll likely be there to greet you the next time you stop in. We at Pensacola Opera know that the long weekend he takes each year is a trip to New York City. There he indulges his passion for opera as he takes in several performances at the Metropolitan Opera.

When Pensacola Opera announced this year's season "On the Road", Bill, a season ticket holder for over 12 years, called to voice his concerns about having to drive to Niceville all the way from Gulf Shores. First, he didn't want to miss *La Boheme*, and second, he didn't want to lose his grand tier tickets at the Saenger Theater—who wouldn't! After hearing why the Mattie Kelly Fine and Performing Arts Center was chosen for *La Boheme*—because of its state-of-the-art facility prime for opera-enjoyment—Bill came around and renewed his season subscription, even with the drive.

Bill also made a gift to show his

long-time support and belief in having a professional opera company in his area. Over the summer, Bill gave a gift of \$50,000 to Pensacola Opera with the promise to continue to give each year. He has also included Pensacola Opera in his estate plans, and is now a proud member of The Legacy Club.

Bill wanted to see the fruits of his labor go to work to make a big impact for this growing company. He has seen the

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phenomenal growth over the last six years under the Artistic Direction of Kyle Marro, also a Michigan fan (to Bill's delight), and Sherrie Mitchell, Executive Director and oyster connoisseur.

Bill says, "I can't imagine investing my money in a better company. Pensacola Opera has the talent and the vision. What

they need now are the financial resources to take them to new heights. I am proud to be able to contribute to their growth."

Of course Bill enjoys going to the Met once a year and listening to the live-broadcasts over his headphones as he roots for Michigan football, but in his mind, Pensacola Opera is up to par. Bill has said that our 2006 production of *Lucia* was better than the one he saw at the Met, but shhhh!, we can't let them know that. Bill expressed that our operas are "fresh" and that "the talent is impeccable." Chauncey Packer's tenor voice is always a joy to hear at Pensacola Opera—and with Franco Corelli as his favorite tenor ever, that's quite the compliment.

Bill believes in Pensacola Opera and he has turned that belief into support. Because he believes so much, he would like to challenge all of us to make an investment in our opera company.

Thank you for your vision, Bill, and thank you for your support.

Visit www.paparocco.com to find out more about Bill "Papa" McGinnes and what's going on at his restaurant. He'll be looking forward to seeing you!