

# A Gracious Goodbye

When a loyal customer was diagnosed with terminal cancer, one Operator gave her a living memorial as memorable as she was.

**JOYCE TERRY** fell in love with Chick-fil-A 35 years ago, even though she'd never eaten at a Restaurant.

A traveling nurse who began her career on a ship in East Asia, Joyce was attending a conference where Truett Cathy delivered a keynote address about Chick-fil-A's business, brand and values. She was so taken with his speech that she decided she needed to meet Truett afterward. When she did, he handed her a "Be Our Guest" Card with his name on it that she could redeem for a free Chick-fil-A® Chicken Sandwich at her local Restaurant. There was just one problem: She lived in San Francisco, and at the time, the city didn't have a local Restaurant.

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—Operator Brent Allen

Joyce kept Truett's BOG for more than three decades. In 2012, she found out Chick-fil-A was opening its first East Bay Area Restaurant, and she was determined to be one of its first customers, says Operator Brent Allen, who operates Walnut Creek FSR in Walnut Creek, California.

"She was in her late 80s at the time. She and two of her friends came for our Grand Opening weekend and waited in line to eat at our Restaurant," Brent recalls.

"When she got inside, she made a beeline for me and introduced herself. She gave me a big hug and told me how thankful she was that we were there," Brent says. "When she heard Truett talk about the values of our brand and incorporating those values into the business, it had a lasting impact on her. When she found out our Restaurant was opening, she saw it as a blessing and an answer to her prayers."

Joyce could finally redeem her BOG, but Brent made sure that didn't happen. "I took care of her meals quite a bit, but I wouldn't let her use that card. It was too special," Brent says. "I told her she should keep it."

Brent and Joyce became fast friends. "She came in every couple of weeks and always brought a new friend with her. Every time she came in she'd find me and ask me to sit with her for a little bit," Brent says. "She was a true Raving Fan."

In 2014, Joyce told Brent she had terminal lung cancer and that her dying wish was to have a living memorial at Chick-fil-A with 35 of her closest friends. Brent was more than happy to help. "I set up the back part of the Restaurant for her and her friends and took care of all their meals. Two of my Team Members and I provided table service with menus," Brent says. "Joyce came in dressed to the nines, and her friends took turns saying a few words about her. It was really special. I felt very honored by it."

When Joyce passed away a few weeks later at the age of 91, Brent attended the funeral and donated several trays of food to her family for the reception. Brent says he'll always remember Joyce's high expectations of him and her excitement for the Restaurant. "She would always want me to tell her friends about my story and the Chick-fil-A story," Brent says. "I felt a determination every time I saw her to work hard at honoring Truett's words to her 30 years ago."

He'll also remember that Joyce taught him and his Team Members the essence of 2nd Mile Service.

"When I came to the Bay Area, many of the Team Members I hired didn't grow up with Chick-fil-A and had never eaten at a Chick-fil-A restaurant. I needed them to understand that we're not just a transactional Restaurant," Brent says. "We're a Restaurant that cares about the customers in our community. Having the opportunity to serve someone like Joyce allowed me to model that 2nd Mile mentality for them and to live out my own personal values of service in the workplace." ■



Operator Brent Allen and Joyce Terry at her



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