

Forward Janesville Small Business of the Year Award

January 23, 2020

I first thank my marvelous love and business partner of a half century, my dear Kathy. We know couples who have a solid marriage and successful business, but can't work in the same room—so they don't. Our secret: I stay out of Kathy's bakery.

To my knowledge none of my forbears has ever worked for anyone—all small business owners: farms, dairy, ice cream company, general store, road cart manufactory, as well as cooper, dress, upholstery shops. Kudos to their genes.

For years, our youngest children anchored our staff—the privilege of a lifetime to work and live and love together. Three still provide invaluable service. A self-taught tech and electronics whiz, one son maintains our equipment and automation. As roaster, another son wafts Janesville some of its finest aromas. Our daughter supervises morning catering. And the next generation looms. Grandson Felix feeds birds with me.

Thanks to Larry Squires for his risk with an unproven entrepreneur. Thanks to Brad Cantrell who conceived and delivered our access drive without which Mocha Moment's lot would be a traffic jam. Longtime friends, for appreciation alone, sacrificed countless days and weeks to erect and plumb our building, landscape our grounds, keep our website, and bake our coffee cakes. I adore Kathy's several sisters who hauled their many children hundreds of miles from sunny Florida to frigid Wisconsin to launch our enterprise on a snowy and sub-zero Monday, January 13, 17 years ago.

Soon we were accruing new friends who advanced our venture. A husband and wife dug up their own flowers and planted our beds by auto headlight. A builder with unimpeachable character partnered to purchase our corner lot. An experienced landscaper whom I hardly knew asked, "Who's landscaping your corner?" When I responded, "Friends and I," he said, "I'll help." I answered, "I know who you are and I can't afford you." To which he replied, "I like you. I like Mocha Moment. And I want it to succeed. I'll do it for you, if you let me." And that's why our corner sports its magnificent berm and professional gardens.

When Dick Williams was asked his secret to the Oakland A's consecutive championships in 72 and 73, he replied, "Any manager could win the World Series with these players." Our Mocha Moment staff would tempt any owner to write a book. Several outstanding bakers now team with Kathy. Many a Saturday, our coffee house is crewed by none but a "bunch of teenagers." Lately, a maintenance man and landscaper take pride in our buildings and grounds so my life has grown less hectic.

Finally, I want to thank area utilities for preserving our retreat by not installing a phone. Also, Window Whisk for not quickening our pace by hustling our homey treats to a frenetic world.

Thank you Janesville. And thank you Forward Janesville for this moment in the sun.