

Kirkwood's Beloved Ice Cream Stand

By Karen Ferguson, Town of Kirkwood Historian

To preserve history is to tell the stories of the present. This month's article is set to do just that by sharing the story of Kirkwood's Beloved Ice Cream Stand: Frosty Joe's.

The current property was and is owned by Gorick. In 2005, the corner lot at Track Drive and Barlow Road was fenced in, overgrown, and used to store vehicles. Jeff Decosse and then wife, Paula, petitioned the Town to rezone the lot so that he could lease the property and build the ice cream stand. Zoning was granted and the Planning Board approved the plans on June 12, 2006.

Immediately the lot was cleared and construction began. At this same time, the Flood of 2006 devastated the area. Jeff recalled seeing helicopters lifting residents out of their homes while he was in the process of building the deck. He wondered if this was a bad sign to try to open the business. However, a few weeks later, the building was completed and Frosty Joe's opened in July 2006.

The business name "Frosty Joe's" came about because this was not intended to only be an ice cream stand. It was also established as a coffee shop serving Java Joe's coffee. The name Frosty represented the ice cream and Joe represented the coffee and the brand they were serving. (The name Joe also became significant because Paula's father, Joe Gable Sr., passed away 7 months before the opening.) In September of that first year, Jeff and Paula transitioned from serving the ice cream to then serving coffee, bagels, soup and sandwiches. Customers would use the drive-up window located on the side of the business to pick up their items. Frosty Joe's remained open the entire winter season; however, that would be the only time that would happen because Dunkin' Donuts opened down the road the following spring. For most businesses, this would be devastating. For Frosty Joe's, they focused on the ice cream portion and has been a beloved fixture in this town for 17 years. While Paula isn't a co-owner anymore, she is still very supportive of the business and frequently comes and helps during each season opening.

It would be remiss to say that the only reason people come to Frosty Joe's is because of the ice cream. For many folks, it is because of the owner. Jeff's contributions to Kirkwood and the surrounding area are too numerous to even count. In fact, a huge tribute organized by Ed Travis was held on August 13, 2023 as a way to honor Jeff and show appreciation for all he has done. Hundreds of people showed up to say 'thank you' for all he has done. A business that supports the community and a community that supports the business is what truly defines "community".

