

CW Furis

## Biography

In Junior Highschool I knew that I wanted to be in the Hospitality Industry. This led me to attending Davis and Elkins College in West Virginia. At the time it was one of the few places to get a Hospitality Degree and had an amazing Colonial style campus with 2 mansions on the property. During my sophomore year I joined Marriott International as a part time associate and spent the next 25 years working in hotels always overseeing the restaurant and banquets as well as either Front Office or Housekeeping. During that time I had constant thoughts of opening a bed n breakfast or a restaurant. Eventually I moved back to the Pittsburgh area after traveling throughout the Northeast mostly troubleshooting hotels for Marriott. After an 8-hour interview with the new General Manager of the Wyndham University Center to be converted into the Hilton Garden Inn University Center. The GM was fascinated with my trouble shooting skills as well as my diverse background. After joining the team I met my best friend Brandon Boles and we would frequently talk about opening a Restaurant. Now present-day Brandon is now our Executive Chef and VP of Food and Beverage. The plan is to open as many restaurants as we can. This will take some time as we want to ensure that the Penny's Delight location is fully capable of running with the team we are training.

Now for a flash back to my Heritage. My mother and fathers Grandparents all came to the United States thru Ellis Island with their children my grandparents. My Mothers side came from Ireland, Scotland and Poland. My Fathers side came from the Ukraine, and Czechoslovakia. This combination in my parents passed onto me has created a desire in me to introduce people to the comfort food and traditions of those countries as well as the comfort foods from around the world. Why comfort food you may ask??? To me these are usually the best to represent the food of a country and bring back memories for people. I have always tried to bring joy to people and a great way to do that is great food. Some of my best memories are from meals at both my grandparent's homes. Anytime I get to eat food from the traditions I was raised on. Also, with both of my parents working I spent a lot of time with my grandparents. My grandmothers spent the most time with me and that was typically in the kitchen. My Grandma Furis was the one who taught me how to make the best tasting pierogies. To this day I am still using her recipes for our standard selections. The non-traditional pierogies have come thru general experimentation. The same was I was able to come up with a Gluten Free dough that you can't tell difference between that and regular dough. The hardest part is using separate tools and ensuring everything is perfectly sterilized so that no one gets gluten in the GF ones. We do the same for all allergies for our customers who request specific items for allergies. My Grandma Cain taught me about cleanliness and perfection. She was very attentive to all details. For years she was the most requested person to do floral arrangements for any event. She had a great talent for creativity and basically OCD for details. The talents that she passed on to me have been extremely helpful in the restaurant industry since everything must be very clean. The creativity she passed on to me I believe came naturally thru genetics but has allowed me to provide a great dining atmosphere and keep me from not being fearful of experimenting with food.

The idea of Penny's Delight came from inspiration of Covid 19 and lockdowns. I had many friends looking for Pierogies and due to the conditions, all of the churches were closed. So, I started making them for friends. Then it became family of the friends and eventually other people of those friends. Through all of this I was making them 7 days a week and began looking for a permanent location. 2 years later I found our current shop. Collaborating with my best friend Brandon Boles we talked about menu options and kitchen design. I was able to convince him to partner with me on making this dream of ours come true. The plan all along was not to just focus on pierogies but to have a variety of different food. Brandon became in charge of the menu and training the kitchen team. Brandon's wife Rhonda Boles who is also a great friend has been focused on our technology. Also joining the team is a long-time friend and former coworker is Karen Goodhart who has always been great at sales. She spends her time soliciting locations for us to promote our business and find catering opportunities. That is when she is not helping me take care of my mother Penny Furis who you will see at the shop helping make the pierogies with my Aunt Lou.

Very close to my heart is my family and the challenges we have faced with Dementia. Having Alzheimer's run on my mothers side of the family I have committed to donate a portion of our profits to Alzheimer's Research and will do our best to help others with fundraising needs, because being in the community is not as important as being part of the community. One of our latest ventures is becoming a sponsor for the Girls Volleyball Team at the Ambridge Highschool. We have also been doing events with the Harmony Township Ladies Auxiliary, Sisters of the Poor, and Ambridge Police stuff a cruiser.