

National Barbecue News

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Does your business depend on the barbecue industry for its survival?

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Here's our story... *National Barbecue News*

Once upon a time, there were two good fishin' buddies who also enjoyed cooking — especially barbecue, on their small gas and charcoal grills. Dr. Donald "Doc" Gillis, a local Douglas, Ga., dentist, first entered a local barbecue competition in the mid 80's and judges found it good enough to be a winner. "Wow, this is fun!" said



Dr. Donald Gillis and wife Frances who, along with the Phelps, published the first *National Barbecue News* in Feb. 1990.

Doc, and immediately checked around for other competitions. He spent some time working on his cooking rig and called in his friend, Joe Phelps, a local publishing company owner, to help. Now it became a passionate pastime for both of these men, their children, and grandchildren.

Their team, known as The Smoke House, won several Grand Championships and finished well in the Memphis in May competition in the late 80's and early 90's. It was soon evident that more information was needed to quench their thirst for this new barbecue competition thing. The conversation went something like this. Doc said, "Joe, it looks like someone would put out a publication that would tell us all about barbecue!"

To this, Joe responded, "I don't know anyone better than us since we have the press facility already."

Doc quickly said, "Hey, I've always wanted to know what kind of newspaper publisher I would make!" This was late 1989, and in February of 1990, the *National Barbecue News* was distributed to its first subscribers and to large barbecue competitions and restaurants around the Southeast. By mid-1995, the publication was being received by thousands each

month, and they already had a presence on the web at www.BarbecueNews.com.

In 1999, when Doc was ready to slow down and sell his dental practice, he and



Joe and Carlene Phelps owned the paper from 1999 until July 2003 when they sold the publication to their youngest son, Kell.

Joe almost decided to sell the paper. However, Joe and his wife, Carlene, sold their printing facility and two local publications about this time and decided to purchase Doc's half

of the business. Until this time, Carlene had spent most of her time as publisher of the *Coffee County News* and *Douglas Shopper* and Joe ran the printing facility, known as the Advertising Mart.

Joe stayed on as publisher and Carlene became the editor of the *National Barbecue News* and continued until they were ready to free up more time for other barbecue-related projects. In July of 2003, Joe and Carlene sold the paper to their youngest son, Kell Phelps. Kell had actually been a part of the cooking team in the beginning and knew a little about this "barbecue thang."

According to *NBBQN's* editor, Carlene Phelps, the younger Phelps brings a lot of vitality and great ideas into the company and its publication.

The format of the paper has changed as we strive to better inform our readers and advertisers about this wonderful world of barbecue. Our barbecue forum and internet site at www.BarbecueNews.com are updated regularly. However, one must subscribe to the paper to get all the articles and columns featured each month. It's a great community to serve!

Note: Our beloved co-founder, "Doc" Gillis, passed away in October 2005.



The paper continues to grow and prosper today under the watchful eye of Kell Phelps, who purchased the paper in 2003.