

meet a board member

AMY MOSS

*McGill's Restaurant, Tulsa*

# 'I Was Meant to Do Exactly What I Am Doing'

## Amy Moss Marks 25 Years of Growth in Tulsa Restaurants

By April Sandefer, Oklahoma Restaurateur • Photo By Gordon Walker, Oklahoma Restaurateur

In 1996, Hal Walker hired a 17-year-old high school student to be a server at Full Moon Cafe, a Tulsa restaurant he owned with Greg McGill. Nothing terribly significant about that. Amy Moss was one of many restaurant employees working her way through school. Little did either know that 25 years later, Moss would still be working with him, climbing her way up the ladder to become an operating partner of McGill's Restaurant.

A native of Tulsa, Moss, who has been an Oklahoma Restaurant Association Board member since 2019, graduated from Claremore High School, and then earned her bachelor's degree in business management from Oklahoma State University. Throughout this time, Moss worked her way up the chain at Full Moon Cafe to bartender, manager and general manager of one of the restaurants.

Walker and McGill were operating Full Moon Cafe Restaurants across Oklahoma for many years when they felt the desire to offset the chain with a more upscale dining experience. In 1990, they opened McGill's in Tulsa, with the goal of introducing a restaurant that offered fine dining, in a slightly relaxed atmosphere. Three locations later, McGill's has become a staple for locally-owned restaurants in Tulsa.

In 2000, Walker and McGill sold the Full Moon Cates. Moss moved over to McGill's as a day bar manager and continued to work as a manager, then general manager and today as Walker's partner. She helped them open two of their other

concepts as well - Gills Wood Grill and Charlie Mitchell's Modern Pub.

Moss is very proud of the longevity of the McGill's concept. Perfecting tasks such as hand selecting fish to assure premium quality and maximum freshness is just one reason she feels they have been able to stay so successful. Back in 1996, she hadn't realized she would be a part of that longevity.

"I never planned on staying in the restaurant business long-term," Moss said. "Life is never how you plan it. I got married and had children. I had always planned to do other things but looking back at it all, I was meant to do exactly what I'm doing."

Moss is not the only one who has stayed with the restaurant over the years. "There are multiple long-term employees here at McGill's," she said. "We have three others -- not including myself -- who have worked here for over 20 years. Additionally, we have two or three employees who have worked here 10 to 15 years, and probably three or four in between the five to 10-year range. That's one of the great things about McGill's...there is not only longevity in the brand, but in the people, as well.

"The people - both customers and co-workers - are why I love going to work every day... hands down," she said.







The people are also a reason Moss feels ORA membership is so valuable. "The biggest reason I believe membership to the ORA is important is the networking and support you get from fellow restaurateurs.

"Hal and Greg have been long term members of the ORA and are both past Chairmen: she said. McGill served as chairman in 2001 and Walker in 2004. "Through the years. McGill's has been involved in about every part of the organization."

Moss and her husband. Brandon have an 18-year-old son. Jaxon, who is a freshman at Oklahoma State University and a 9-year-old daughter, Kiley. When not working, Moss attends her kids' sporting events. "Jaxon - a pitcher - has played competitive baseball his entire life." she said. "Kiley plays basketball, softball and golf. They certainly keep us busy.

Pre-pandemic, Moss also enjoyed travel, but, of course, COVID-19 changed a lot of things. This past year has been challenging, even for restaurants with a deep footprint in the industry. McGill's is no different and has had to adapt and get creative while keeping true to concept, Moss said. "The pandemic has made us operate better. There is always something that can be improved and we constantly look for ways to evolve."

