



Jimmy Zavogiannis has become a community fixture in Warren County after opening Gondola Restaurant here nearly 30 years ago. His first year was 1989.

The restaurant changed locations after Shoney's went out of business and Jimmy spent the better part of a year renovating that sagging building for Gondola.

"That was a really big project," said Jimmy. "It took us nine months to complete."

While known for his cuisine, Jimmy, 67, is also the husband of District Attorney General Lisa Zavogiannis. Jimmy's full-speed campaigning on her behalf has helped her to get elected to two terms as the top law enforcement official in Warren and Van Buren counties.

"I love campaigning because you get to meet so many interesting people," said Jimmy. "It's definitely a big challenge that's full of disappointment and surprises. People you think are going to be in your corner turn out not to be, and people you would never think would be for you, turn out to give you support. It's different than anything else."

As a restaurant owner, Jimmy has donated his share of food to those in need. One annual contribution is to Project Graduation, an all-night party at McMinnville Civic Center for graduating seniors and their guests.

Jimmy Z may be best known for restaurant work, but he also owns his own factory in J&J Powder Coating, Sandblasting and Fabrication.

"We do exactly what our name says we do," said Jimmy, who has quietly owned the business for four years. "I'll probably always be in the restaurant business, but I like what this place does. We refurbish and restore. We take things ready for the scrap pile and bring them back to life. We also fabricate and create."

Jimmy Z took an interest in the business when he was a customer. Back when he was remodeling the old Shoney's building, he relied on the services of J&J, which was owned by James Gooch at the time. As Jimmy Z learned more about the business, he decided he would like to buy it and eventually a deal was reached.

J&J does work for a number of local factories such as Metal Products Company, Master Tool, Precision Engineering, and more.

Jimmy has also extended his reach to commercial property and currently owns the old Warren County Furniture building on Morford Street and what was once The Vineyard in Newtown.

But his meat and potatoes, so to speak, is Gondola, which is open 365 days a year from 6 a.m. to 10 p.m. daily. With those extended hours, the restaurant serves breakfast, lunch and dinner.

"We owe it to our customers to be open at their convenience, not our convenience," said Zavogiannis. "We give you more reasons to open our door than anyone else. We know you can get in your car and drive anywhere to eat. We want you to choose Gondola because of the quality and the variety. We have something on the menu for everyone. It's hard for me to imagine someone coming here and not finding something they like."

Jimmy has worked his way up the proverbial ladder, getting his start at a Gondola in Cookeville in 1972 that was owned by one of his good friends.



**Jimmy
Zavogiannis**

Though your many acts of kindness may never be known to some, what is evident to all is the incredibly loving father and husband you are to your family. Your life has brought blessings to so many people in so many places, but to none more than us. We are so fortunate and proud to call you our own.

- Love, all of your family