

Angie Graham

When Angie Graham turned the front patio of her home on Erb Street into a diner in 1962, she showed that she was as optimistic as she was strong.



When Graham and her husband Bill decided to start Angie's Kitchen, Waterloo was a very different place than it is today. Behind their house was Snider's Flour Mill and in front of them were fields all the way to the universities.

Horses belonging to the Mennonite farmers who parked behind their home, provided the Grahams with the best manure in town for their garden.

Despite its modest beginning, Angie's Kitchen rapidly became a place to eat hearty comfort food, and Graham's personality made it a home away from home for many. It first became known for its tasty 45-cent fish and chip dinners.

"Hospitality and kindness were the things she lived by," her son said.

Angie Graham's strength and optimism would be put to the test two years after they opened for business, when her husband Bill was killed by a drunk driver in front of the restaurant. She was left with five children, ranging in age from six to fifteen and a business to run. Remarkably, she continued to manage the business while caring for her five children.

"She was a very dominant, hard-working force in our family and in our community. We keep telling her that she didn't do too bad," her daughter Teresa Huegle once said.

The restaurant eventually expanded into the living room, the kitchen and the sun porch. In 1971, Angie's daughter Teresa Huegle and son Michael Graham bought the business and a few years later the pair opened another location in St. Agatha, known as Angie's Country Kitchen.

In addition to surviving the tragic death of Bill Graham, Angie's Kitchen has thrived in spite of two recessions and a growing city. Largely because of Angie Graham's strength and vision, Angie's Kitchen remains a Waterloo landmark serving hearty meals forty-five years after its modest at-home beginnings.

Graham stepped back from the diner in her later years, content to sit in a special chair and greet customers. She died suddenly in 1997 of a heart attack.

At a large 75th birthday party, celebrated at Angie's Country Kitchen in St. Agatha, Graham reflected on her life, saying "Time flies when you're having a good time and I guess I must have been having a good time all my life."

Photo courtesy of Angie's Kitchen.