

Thank You for your support and patronage!

It has been an honor and a privilege to serve lunch and dinner to the South Bend community for the past year and a half and to work with such an outstanding group of employees. Your willingness to embrace the J Willy's concept has been very much appreciated and will be forever missed!

J Willy's BBQ House, made famous by Chef Gordon Ramsay on the hit TV series "Kitchen Nightmares," closed its doors for good Thursday evening February 4th. We had hoped that we could survive these tough economic times, but such was not the case. Many small business owners, and especially those who own restaurants today, are faced with many of the same challenges that we have been faced with over the past many months—doing more with less and still keeping our standards unquestionably high. Unfortunately, there is only so much discretionary spending that one can cut without it affecting the quality of the meal and the overall dining experience. With food prices increasing and customer counts decreasing in record numbers over the past several months, we were put in the unenviable position of cutting our standards below which we were comfortable, or else ceasing operations altogether. After much thought and reflection, we chose the latter.

Gordon Ramsay has had a profound effect on my management style, which included making everything we serve fresh, each and every day, and to never lower our standards, no matter what. Although this approach is generally considered to be the gold-standard of restaurant operations, this particular approach to management gets called into question when operating in survival mode, as we were. Balancing the effect of running out of a product versus having it available all day is a daily battle as owners want to satisfy the requests of their guests. Recognizing my passion to offer customers the best dining experience possible and, at the same time, vowing never to cut corners again, the decision to quit operations was inevitable. It is my fervent hope

that J Willy's will be back again one day, perhaps even stronger than ever, but not until we can ensure our guests the highest food quality possible, and at the level to which it was created by Chef Gordon Ramsay.

Irrespective of what tomorrow holds, I would like to personally thank our impressive staff who worked so well together until the very end. There was much personal sacrifice from everyone to see us through the tough times, and, to them, I would like to say a special "Thank you for giving it your very best!" I know that our guests appreciated it.

We operated like family and while it is disheartening to see our tremendous staff members go their separate ways, I know that they will continue to excel in their new jobs just as they did at J Willy's. A compliment to a chef or an owner from a guest is one of the greatest feelings one can have in the restaurant business, and we continued to receive these compliments up until the evening our doors closed—making our decision to close all the more difficult. Gordon allowed us to experience that feeling quite frequently, on a daily and even an hourly basis most days. And, for this I say "Thank you Gordon." We tried our best and gave it our all, unfortunately we didn't make it. The economy won out.

To our valued guests and loyal patrons, I say please continue buying our BBQ sauce, available in some retail stores in South Bend, and over the internet, and perhaps one day J Willy's will again be back—better and stronger than ever!

Fondly,

J Willy