



**Press Clippings
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Title: A North Philly bakery that inspires fierce loyalty, with heart, soul, and pound cake

Author: True Viral News

Link: <http://trueviralnews.com/a-north-philly-bakery-that-inspires-fierce-loyalty-with-heart-soul-and-pound-cake/>

Date: October 10, 2017

In the early '90s, Denise Gause's North Philadelphia kitchen buzzed with the sound of three electric mixers whirring at once. After returning home from working two jobs, she baked late into the night, often collapsing into bed at 1 a.m. Her dishwasher never stopped running, and a dusting of flour coated the first floor of the house. On Sundays, her husband sifted bowls of it while watching football.

Her baking business, which started as a hobby and a way to share her cakes with friends and neighbors, was out of control. Something had to change. So Gause moved her equipment into a building on North 22nd Street that had once housed a bakery, hired six people, and put them to work.

This month, Gause is celebrating 25 years of Denise's Delicacies, the bakery that has long been an anchor of its Allegheny West neighborhood. The staff has grown to 26, and Gause has weathered a changing neighborhood and a devastating fire that almost put her out of business. But after more than a year of renovation and rebuilding, she came back. She finally reopened in May 2016 to customers lined up down the block. Still, each and every day, people line up for her homestyle cakes, cookies, pies, and pastries.

"I didn't have a business plan, I didn't have a goal," said Gause, 64. "For me, it was just about getting the baking out of my home and somewhere I could manage it. Little did I know what I was getting myself into. If you'd told me it would have turned out like this, I wouldn't have believed it."

Gause's baked goods inspire fierce loyalty. Some customers come from New Jersey, or continue visiting even after they move away. Gause's dense, buttery pound cake, sold whole or by the slice, is the biggest moneymaker; Gause's team makes anywhere from 400 to 600 pounds of that cake daily. But Denise's has also become known as a reliable destination for elaborate special-occasion cakes.

"She made all my grandkids' cakes, my kids' graduation cakes, all our pies and cakes for every Christmas, every Thanksgiving," said Bonnie Mangrum of West Philadelphia, a customer for more than a decade. "My family looks forward to it. Every year, they ask and I tell them, 'You know I'm getting Denise's!' What else would I get?"

Gause lives in West Mount Airy now, but she grew up close to the building that houses Denise's. When she was a child, it was a German bakery, and she often stopped to peer

into the display cases at the chocolate-iced cupcakes. Today, the cases are filled with sweet potato pies, 12 types of cookies, birthday cakes lined with colorful frosting, carrot cake, and more. Behind the front room is Gause's empire, a labyrinthine series of halls and rooms dedicated to cake decorating, baking, and making dough in industrial-size mixers.

Gause went to Peirce College and became a secretary for a brokerage firm, then to Cigna, where she worked for 18 years as an executive secretary and director of benefits planning. For years, she held a second, part-time, job at a law firm, working evenings after her job at Cigna ended for the day.

In her early 30s, her career hit a difficult patch and she turned to baking as a way to relieve stress. She asked friends and neighbors to call when they needed a cake for a special occasion. She learned the basics of cake decorating, using silk flowers before she knew how to create them from icing. The orders piled up. She found a commercial kitchen to use, but she couldn't keep up. So, with help from her father, a Realtor, she bought the building at 22nd and West Cambria Streets, with the goal of turning it into a bakery again.

Denise's opened on Oct. 25, 1992, with a small team of people trained to make Gause's recipes. They started getting walk-in customers. That first Thanksgiving, there were so many pie orders there was barely enough room to store them.

Gause thinks Denise's took off because there was nothing like it in the neighborhood and people were hungry for non-supermarket desserts. At first, some customers complained about her prices – but not once they'd tasted the product, she said.

"I knew nothing about inventory, none of it," Gause said. "I look back and think about it, and I don't even know how I learned what I learned."

Gause left her day job shortly after opening Denise's. By year three, already outgrowing the space, she expanded, buying a series of vacant buildings behind the bakery, one of which was a former chop shop. The neighborhood strip was changing; gone was the dress shop and Italian deli from her childhood. For a time, her only neighbors were nail salons and bodegas. Now, there are restaurants, a drugstore, clothing stores, even a butcher shop – and local merchants say Denise's has helped attract customers for all of them.

For decades, almost everything ran smoothly at Denise's, until late one Saturday night in March 2015, when fire sparked in the corner of a back room. By the time the Fire Department arrived, the flames had spread to the front of the bakery. Gause and her husband returned from out of town to find a building with broken windows, damaged by smoke and water. Officials never determined the fire's origin.

"Our first reaction was, 'OK, we're done,' " Gause said. "The devastation of it really sank in."

But after a few weeks, she decided to rebuild. It took 14 months to repair the damage and get the building up to code, but Denise's reopened in May 2016 to a line that stretched down the block. It was two months before those lines subsided.

Waiting in line on a recent Wednesday, Germantown resident Sweeney Brown said he'd been going to Denise's several times a week for a decade, recently to get a cake for his and his wife's 50th anniversary. During the year Denise's was closed, he'd had to make do with baked goods from grocery stores.

"It's a night-and-day difference," he said. "It's like having a quality lady. You don't want to settle for the run-of-the-mill ones."

Monique Collins, who lives a few blocks away, said she wasn't supposed to eat pound cake for health reasons. "But I cheat," she said.

Asked whether the line was always so long, she shook her head. "I don't care," she said. "It's worth it."

Title: Minority attorney conference to honor Charisse R. Lillie

Author: Ayana Jones Tribune Staff Writer

Link: http://www.phillytrib.com/news/minority-attorney-conference-to-honor-charisse-r-lillie/article_9f1248f4-3962-5134-96c8-9fa25303171c.html

Date: October 13, 2017

Philadelphia trailblazer Charisse R. Lillie will be honored Friday with the A. Leon Higginbotham Jr. Lifetime Achievement Award during the 29th Annual Pennsylvania Bar Association (PBA) Minority Attorney Conference, "Advocacy & Fundamental Rights for Changing Times."

The conference is being held on Oct. 12 to 13 at the Pennsylvania Bar Institute CLE Conference Center.

The A. Leon Higginbotham Jr. Lifetime Achievement Award recognizes the accomplishments of a lawyer or judge who has demonstrated dedication to the legal profession and the minority community through civil, community or legal service.

Higginbotham, who died in 1998, was a civic leader, author, academic and federal appeals court judge who fought tirelessly against racial discrimination.

A business woman, attorney and lecturer on issues of diversity, corporate responsibility and corporate governance, Lillie became CEO of CRL Consulting LLC earlier this year after retiring from a 12-year run at Comcast Corporation, where she held several roles including senior vice president of human resources, and vice president of community investment, as well as president of the Comcast Foundation.

Prior to joining Comcast, Lillie was a partner at Ballard Spahr LLP's litigation department and served as its chair from 2002 to 2005.

Lillie also spent some time serving the public as a trial attorney, U.S. Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division; deputy director, Community Legal Services Inc.; professor at Villanova Law School; assistant U.S. attorney, U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania; general counsel, Redevelopment Authority of the City of Philadelphia and city solicitor, city of Philadelphia.

Lillie achieved many firsts throughout her diverse career.

She was the first African-American woman to serve as city solicitor of the city of Philadelphia, the first African American to chair Ballard Spahr's litigation department, the first African-American woman to chair the Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia Board and the first African-American woman to chair the Board of Governors of the Philadelphia Bar Association.

An active member of her community, Lillie has been involved in many civic commissions, including the Independent Charter Commission, the Philadelphia Criminal Justice Task Force, the MOVE Commission and the Philadelphia Election Reform Task Force.

She has held positions on several boards, including the Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia, the Pennsylvania Intergovernmental Cooperation Authority, the Philadelphia Board of Ethics, The Penn Mutual Life Insurance Company, PECO, PNC Regional Advisory Board for Philadelphia and Southern New Jersey and the Independence Blue Cross Consumer and Business Affairs Advisory Board.

Equally active in the bar, Lillie is a member of the PBA Labor and Employment Law Section and is a regular sponsor of the association's diversity events.

She previously served as president of the Philadelphia chapter of the Federal Bar Association, chair of the Philadelphia Bar Association's Board of Governors and its Racial Bias in the Justice System Committee, chair of the American Bar Association Commission on Racial and Ethnic Diversity in the Profession and a member of the ABA Standing Committee on the Federal Judiciary. She also served on the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania Committee on Racial and Gender Bias in the Justice System.

Lillie has received many honors for her distinguished service to the public and her profession.

Originally from Houston, Texas, Lillie received a B.A., cum laude, from Wesleyan University in 1973. She received a J.D. from Temple University School of Law in 1976 and an L.L.M. from Yale Law School in 1982. While in law school, she worked as a research assistant for Judge Higginbotham on his first book, *In the Matter of Color*, and was a law clerk to Judge Clifford Scott Green, U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania. She was awarded honorary doctor of laws degrees from Seton Hill University and Cheyney University, as well as an honorary doctor of humane letters degree from Peirce College.

The two-day PBA Minority Attorney Conference where Lillie will be honored will feature a keynote address by State Sen. Arthur L. Haywood III.

Founded in 1895, the Pennsylvania Bar Association strives to promote justice, professional excellence and respect for the law; improve public understanding of the legal system and facilitate access to legal services.

Title: To land Amazon, we must shift academic programs to meet workforce needs

Author: Uva Coles

Link: <https://why.org/articles/land-amazon-must-shift-academic-programs-meet-workforce-needs/>

Date: October 26, 2017

With Philadelphia's campaign to be the location of Amazon's HQ2 — and the prospect of adding 50,000 new jobs to the region — now is the time to analyze how well our colleges, universities, and K-12 schools are preparing students for tomorrow's workforce.

I think it is fair to say that some leaders in education and industry have employed a traditional mindset in considering how to develop the skill sets and capabilities of new hires and current employees who are eager to advance. We have often lacked coordination and synergy across systems and funding streams and have opted to approach the work of education with rather singular, myopic thinking. In doing so, we have lost focus on the bigger picture. Alignment between education and workforce is not an option; it is a requirement and, accordingly, necessitates a non-traditional approach that emphasizes collaboration, partnership, and systemic impact.

This kind of synergistic, non-traditional approach to education was precisely what was described at a panel discussion at Peirce College earlier this month. A panel of thought leaders from education, business, and philanthropy engaged in a candid conversation about how we, as a city and region, can become a more robust, aligned engine. Our panel included leaders from Comcast and AmeriHealth Caritas, as well as School District of Philadelphia Superintendent Dr. William Hite, and Peirce President Jim Mergjotti. All agreed there is a pronounced need for seismic changes in how we think about the education continuum, from pre-K to career, and its required alignment with workforce and community impact. Further, they also agreed that when that alignment is well-embedded in their respective areas of work, there is an amplified impact on students, employers, communities, and ultimately our region's economy.

Alignment between education and workforce is not an option; it is a requirement.

Let's face it. We've had these discussions before. But as Mayor Jim Kenney and his dedicated staff work to make our city and region competitive, equitable, and economically strong, now is the time for those of us in higher education to reimagine our piece of the workforce development puzzle and offer our respective contributions. Increasingly, many employers are experiencing talent deficits among their new hires. They expect college graduates to be ready for the day-to-day tasks of the job with the relevant credentials and competencies. Accordingly, employers are working with educators and higher education institutions to train and re-skill their employees.

This is where partnership becomes essential. We must ensure degree programs are teaching the skills, knowledge and soft skills (e.g., emotional intelligence) employers need the most. And for that, employers need to be a part of the curriculum development process. If we collaborate and effectively shift the focus of our academic programs to meet community and workforce needs, we have the chance to turn the Philadelphia region into an economic powerhouse in which jobs are filled with a diverse set of well-qualified individuals across the traditional and non-traditional talent spectrum. This new reality would, in turn, attract more employers to tap into our talent pool. And as more educated and higher skilled individuals are rewarded with advancement and higher, equitable pay, economically healthier households and communities will evolve.

This effort has already begun at Peirce. We have partnered with more than 50 major employers in the Philadelphia region, city officials, and nonprofit organizations. We are working together to develop solutions for our region's most intractable problems and reimagining the strategic role and impact of higher education. These relationships are informing not only changes in the content of our courses but also positively impacting our students outside of the classroom. For instance, just last month, we became the only college in the region to offer its students affordable Internet access and computers through the Comcast Internet Essentials Program. Thanks to this partnership with one of our region's largest employers, more of our students — and their children — will be able to access the internet at home to support their educational, life, and professional endeavors.

The conversation that happened at our event on workforce development has already led to subsequent exchanges with employers about how to make these ideas a reality. While we continue to do this work, I want to encourage my peers in higher education to tear down our silos and work directly with employers in a more holistic manner. Education, community, business, and government must work together toward a common goal. As President Mergioti said at our Executive Leadership Breakfast, "We are all at different points of that continuum and if we lock arms with each other, we can have real impact."

It's that kind of collaborative, non-traditional thinking that will attract Amazon, and major companies like it, to the Philadelphia region in the years to come. While we wait for Amazon's decision, let's not wait any longer for the opportunity to drive systemic impact. Together, we can certainly make sure that [#PhillyDelivers](#) today!

Uva C. Coles is vice president of institutional advancement and strategic partnerships at Peirce College. A seasoned nonprofit executive, professional speaker, and writer, Coles focuses on the intersection of education, career, and identity. She explores and promotes the value of workforce development and equity through cross-sector partnerships, the importance of authentic leadership and career management, and provides thought leadership on Afro-Latinx issues.