

Having been a realtor for the last 30 years, Belinda says it would have been simpler for her to continue on that same course, which has proven to be a comfortable and successful career. At a time in her life when she could have retired if she so desired, her life has decidedly taken a different course because she decided to follow her heart and her passion for cooking.

Belinda began observing her mother, Bessie Mae Hill (now 95 years of age), in the kitchen at a very young age and actually started cooking alongside her mother at the age of 8. She has a large family of 10 siblings and they, as well as others, have always expressed their appreciation of her culinary skills. Her family has a history of migrating to her home for family gatherings numerous times each year, because of their love of her cooking. Belinda says she was also known for catering agent luncheons. Whenever they found out she was cooking they always made it a point to attend. They seemed to thoroughly enjoy her food. She said it would always make her feel good when people said, "That's the best I've ever had in my life!"

Belinda was also interested in recapturing a feeling she didn't have anymore, a comforting feeling she believes is missing in our hectic lives today. She wanted to create a friendly, inviting atmosphere with the feeling of home. This concept would ultimately play an extremely important part in the overall design of her space.

Once she made up her mind, Belinda set out to locate a site to develop her plan. She started out with a single unit in Lithonia, Georgia and has since expanded to occupying three units at this location. The interior is warm and welcoming. Sons, Dexter, Tory and Kelsey as well as their dad contributed their time and/or design of interior features to the space. Hull's husband, Bobby Hubbard was also extremely supportive throughout the project.

Belinda expressed, "So many people have said thank you, thank you, thank you for being here." She loves to see their smiling faces as they walk in and is so very grateful for everyone's support. Her hope is that the community will continue to support her as well as the greater Atlanta metropolitan area. Her promise to the community at large is they

will never stray away from what they have accomplished. Her food will continue to be seasoned to perfection and customer service will continue to be second to none. Her desire is for customers to continue to enjoy delicious homemade cooking, such as their mac and cheese, collard greens, candied yams, banana pudding, peach cobbler and so much more, for many years to come. One of their most requested menu items is the *Old Fashion Fried Corn*. I must say it's one of my favorite dishes as well. Belinda states "We shuck our corn and cut it off the cob every day".

Belinda relayed that all of her cooks are passionate about their work as is she. "Nothing goes out on the line unless it's seasoned to perfection, she said. Her team consists of General Manager, Ronald Smith; Head Chef, Cliff Cook; Chef, Horace Hill; Full-time Baker, Shirley Hill; and Cooks, Michael Hunter and Sabrina Scandrett.

Belinda's also hosts a Sunday Brunch, for which they have received an overwhelming response. Some of the items featured on this menu are red-eye gravy, grits, country ham, salmon croquettes, bacon and sausage to name a few. Belinda says you also must come out and taste the chef's pancakes, which are made from scratch. He even offers a pancake in the likeness of a friendly mouse character we all know and love for the kids.

They're happy to announce that a full service bar is being introduced during the month of February. It will feature a separate menu to include selections such as T-bone steaks, hamburgers, Philly cheesesteaks, salads, baked potatoes, wings, and french fries.

Belinda's Down Home Cooking location and hours of operation:

RESTAURANT

Sunday

9:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m.

Monday Closed

Tuesday - Saturday

11:30 a.m. - 9:00 p.m.

BAR

Sunday - Saturday

12:00 p.m. - 12:30 a.m.

Located in the Salem Crossing Shopping Center at 3596 Panola Road, Lithonia, GA 30038 (from downtown Atlanta, take I-20 E. to Panola Road, go right at the light, and travel 1 mile to shopping center on the left.

For more information please call:

770 323-3999

