



Longtime Cooking Store Owner Passes the 'Spatula' to a New Generation

After nearly four decades as a Main Street business owner, Margaret "Marg" Junkhan is hanging up her apron. This month Mindy Bergstrom took over ownership of Cooks' Emporium, and the building where it is located, at 313 Main Street.

Prior to opening Cooks' Emporium in 1979, Junkhan had taught cooking classes in the adult education program at Ames High School. It was those classes that showed her the need for a cookware store in Ames.

"Students would ask where they could buy the specific equipment I would show them in class," Junkhan said. "I had worked in retail and very much enjoyed it, so I thought 'why not?'"

Bergstrom, who grew up in southwestern Minnesota, always knew she wanted to own a store on a Main Street. Her parents are small business owners, and she started her first small business while she was in college creating low-cost websites for other small businesses. Her husband, Patrick, grew up in Ames and she would often visit downtown Ames, and Cooks' Emporium. After twelve years, working in various advertising agencies, Bergstrom was ready to take the next step.

"When Mindy was interested in buying the business, I was ready," Junkhan said. "I am definitely getting older and it is better to retire while in good health!"

For Bergstrom, Cooks' Emporium couldn't have been a better fit.

"I'm going to continue Marg's legacy with carrying quality kitchenware, products, and brands," Bergstrom said. "I won't sell it if I wouldn't want it in my own kitchen."

But while some things won't change, Bergstrom does have plans to put her mark on the business. She has already updated the POS system with *Square for Retail* as well as organized the basement displays and inventory. In the future, she also plans to rebrand the logo, refresh the website, and completely remodel the store to allow room for more quality products and an updated kitchen to continue cooking demos.

As for Marg, the friends she has made over the years will still see her teaching the occasional cooking class and giving demonstrations, but she also plans to travel, spend time with her grandchildren, and have fun.

“Keeping busy will not be a problem,” Junkhan said. “And I am sure Mindy will do a great job!”