



Queen Anne's Iconic Ken's Market



by Allison Brock
photos by Leo Santiago of Bella Vista Photography

Ken's Market has been a staple on McGraw Street for as long as most Queen Anne residents can remember. Established in 1964, Ken's Market has been providing great customer service, quality products and a true community feel for over 50 years.

Originally owned by Ken Giles, the family-run grocery was one of the few spots on the hill for quality groceries. Over the years the store traded hands between a few owners before three neighborhood friends took ownership in 2007.

"We're all locals. We all grew up here on Queen Anne, which is kind of rare these days," said co-

owner, Joe Vizzare of his business partners, George O'Connor and Eric Giles. All neighborhood boys, the three partners came to Ken's Market in different ways.

"It was my first job," shared Joe. "In 1988 I applied here. I still have the application." He recalls shopping in the market with his mom as a kid, living just down the street, and being prompted by Ken to apply. Partner Eric is Ken's grandson and practically grew up in the store, starting work as a bagger at age nine. Having worked at the market for almost 40 years, George started as a cleaner in the meat department.

Today, the three partners oversee all aspects of keeping the store running. Joe handles the meat department and deli while Eric maintains the produce department and flowers, and George

oversees the groceries, including the wide selection of beer, wine and spirits. Taking great pride in the quality of products offered, the store brings in fresh produce six days a week and the meat counter and deli produces readymade meals, homemade soups and freshly ground beef, all crafted in-house.

When asked what keeps him excited about working at Ken's Market, Joe didn't hesitate: "The customers keep me coming in here," he said. "Saturdays are my favorite day to work," he admitted. "Saturdays are a fun day because you get to see a lot of the kids with their dads and their moms... I get to see them grow up... you get to know them, they're like family."

There are no plans to build out or grow too rapidly for Ken's Market. "[There's a] sense of small business that we try to keep," Joe said. "We've worked hard to really just make it happen for our customers... and it's not just us, it's all the people who have worked here through the years," he said of the community, family feel of the store. "We want to keep it small. A small, local, family store."



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