



THE MINNESOTA RESTAURANT ASSOCIATION  
PROUDLY PRESENTS THE 2005  
HOSPITALITY HALL OF FAME INDUCTEES



**Tuesday, November 15, 2005**  
**Mendakota Country Club, Mendota Heights**



The Minnesota Restaurant Association invites you to join us in honoring eight legends in the restaurant industry as we induct them into the Minnesota Hospitality Hall of Fame.

Each of the 2005 inductees has given more than 20 years of service to the restaurant industry, been deemed “a legend” by their colleagues and influenced future generations of restaurateurs.

These eight are a “who’s who” of the state’s restaurant pioneers. As their colleagues, we are thrilled to be able to honor them for their contributions by selecting them as members of this prestigious assemblage.

Peggy Rasmussen  
Countryside Café, Medina  
President  
Minnesota Restaurant Association

## THE 2005 MINNESOTA HOSPITALITY HALL OF FAME INDUCTEES

**David Fong** – David Fong’s  
**Sal Frederick** – Happy Chef  
**Bill Kozlak** – Jax Café  
**Jack Kozlak** – Kozlak’s Royal Oak Restaurant  
**Henry Kristal** – Embers America  
**Nick Mancini** – Mancini’s Char House  
**Pat Murray** – Murray’s  
**Reuben Palm** – Palm Brothers/Strategic Equipment & Supply Corp.



# DAVID FONG

## DAVID FONG'S

**Born:** Guangdong, China on October 21, 1934. Came to the US when David was 14 along with young siblings Patti and Stephen

**Education:** Franklin Jr. High and North High School in Minneapolis followed by Dunwoody Institute where he studied Mechanical Drafting

**Family:** Wife: Helen, Children: Ed, Don, Amy, Barbara, Cindy and David, Jr. and nine grandchildren



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David Fong's has been a Bloomington landmark since 1958. But this landmark never would have been born if David hadn't become "lost in downtown Bloomington" and saw the "for lease" sign at 98th & Lyndale. David credits his family as well as community involvement and service as his keys to success. "I wouldn't be here without the support of the community." By treating his customers and employees right, along with ensuring that food quality and quality service come first, it is clear how David and his family have kept David Fong's a star of Bloomington for 47 years. When away from the restaurant, David loves to golf, baby-sit his grandchildren and is an active member of the Lions Club.

### Fun Facts:

**Favorite Food Served at David Fong's:** "Our #1 item is our Fong's Combination Dinner of Chicken Chow Mein, Egg Foo Young and Fried Rice. Other favorites include our New York Steak Chinatown, Fong's House Chicken and Shrimp Hong Kong, specialties found only at our restaurant."

**You couldn't pay me to eat/drink:** "There is nothing I wouldn't try! I like everything from exotic fare to home style Chinese and American cooking. In fact, one of my favorite things to do is go to the Minnesota State Fair and EAT!"

**If you could give some words of advice to someone wanting to become a restaurateur, what would they be?** "My advice would be to work hard and enjoy what you are doing. Always greet your customers with a smile; a smile doesn't cost you anything and what you get in return is priceless."

# SAL FREDERICK

## HAPPY CHEF



**Born:** April 17, 1926, in Mankato to parents William & Wanda Frederick, first of 9 children

**Education:** Mankato High School and Vocational Technical College: Association of Applied Science Degree, Apprentice Chef Certificate

**Family:** Wife: Rosemary (Kelly) Frederick, Children: 6 daughters, 16 grandchildren and two great grandchildren

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Former Minnesota Senator Sal Frederick has admitted, “I was always the Happy Chef... You’ll see it engraved on my headstone, next to my wife. It says Happy Chef on top and my name underneath.” Sal became the infamous Happy Chef in 1946 by entering the restaurant industry with his wife Rose. Sal started his career with the Hidden Inn, the Corner Café, Brett’s Grill and the Newman Center Café, all in Mankato. In 1963, Happy Chef was born. Sal served on the Board of Directors of the Minnesota Restaurant Association for nearly two decades and was the President of the Board in the 1960s. He played a key role in the revitalization and expansion of the Minnesota Restaurant Association after the sudden death of Mark Ocken in 1968. While he might be too shy to admit he’s left a legacy, the legions of children who can recall hearing a great knock-knock joke and having their picture taken with their favorite talking statue will always remember their time with their Happy Chef.

### Fun Facts:

**Favorite Food Served at Happy Chef:** “Pancakes (developed and packaged own mix), cinnamon rolls, Happy Chef burger with tomato, lettuce, and Thousand Island dressing.”

**You couldn’t pay me to eat/drink:** “Actually there is no food I have not tried that I know of. I have visited 12 foreign countries and enjoyed the native foods. As an owner/manager, you seldom get to finish a meal without interruption. Remarks were always made about going back to finish a cold meal. I was labeled the ‘Human Garbage Can.’ ”

**If you could give some words of advice to someone wanting to become a restaurateur, what would they be?** “Look deep within yourself to see if you have the intestinal fortitude to do whatever it takes to make a success of your commitment. Always remember, ‘master change or change will master you.’ ”

# BILL KOZLAK

## JAX CAFÉ

**Born:** Son of Joseph, Sr. and Gertrude (Katzmarek) Kozlak, born April 5, 1936, the youngest of four children

**Education:** St. Thomas Academy and Holy Cross College (Worcester, Massachusetts) in 1958

**Family:** Wife: Kathleen (Greeley) Kozlak,  
Children: Ann Marie, Paula, Sue, Katie, Bill, Jr. and Joseph and  
13 grandchildren



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Political rallies, weddings, dances, a furniture store, a hardware store and a mortuary with a side of crabrolls? Only at Jax Café would this combination actually make sense. Bill Kozlak joined the Kozlak family business in 1936 when he was born in Minneapolis. He started his involvement as most children of restaurateurs do, at the back of the house as dishwasher, bus boy, porter and kitchen prep assistant. While Bill had his eye on law school, “the family restaurant fever captured my interest.” Bill feels legacies are left for others to judge, but he won’t deny that “by treating your customers as if they are guests in your home you are assuring them of their importance to you, and they in turn will be loyal to your hospitality.” Bill retired in 2001 leaving Bill, Jr. to carry on the traditions of Jax Café.

### Fun Facts:

**Favorite food served at Jax Café?** “Boston clam chowder, Jax house salad, roast prime rib, sautéed walleye, bone-in-steer tenderloin and Jax Bailey’s Irish Cream torte.”

**You couldn’t pay me to eat/drink:** “Lutefisk and lefse or drink aquavit with it.”

**Greatest personal achievement:** “My greatest personal achievement was marrying a great woman, raising six wonderful children and educating them through college. Now I’m enjoying 13 grandchildren. Also, I’m proud of making Jax a better place than when I started my career there and retiring knowing that Jax is a landmark in the community.”

# JACK KOZLAK

## KOZLAK'S ROYAL OAK RESTAURANT



**Born:** Son of Joseph, Sr. and Gertrude (Katzmarek) Kozlak, born April, 20 1928

**Education:** Graduate of Edison High School and St. Thomas College

**Family:** Wife: Ruth (Wichmann) Kozlak, Children: Diane, Carol, Mark, Lynn, Paul

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In July 1977, Jack and Ruth Kozlak purchased the property that became Kozlak's Royal Oak. A hefty remodeling and building project ensued. Dining room walls were peeled down to the studs, 72 feet of windows were installed, main floor restrooms were built, the kitchen was gutted and refit with new equipment, gardens were built, and on November 15, 1977, Kozlak's Royal Oak opened. Prior to opening Kozlak's Royal Oak, Jack was active at Jax Cafe from 1943 until 1979 when he sold his portion to his partner, brother and fellow Hall of Fame inductee, Bill Kozlak. Jack is a Past President of the Minnesota Restaurant Association, Honorary Director of the National Restaurant Association, former Representative of the Minnesota House of Representatives, former member of the Metropolitan Council and author of the book *The Fun Is in the Struggle*.

### **Fun Facts:**

**What other awards or recognition have you received?** "In 1993 I was honored as an inductee to the Midwest Hall of Fame during the Midwest Food and Beverage Expo in St. Paul."

**How has the industry changed?** "The restaurant business is a lot different than it was when my parents started back in 1943. There was no such thing as tip reporting, FICA, tax on tips or sales tax. There were no restaurant chains that provided competition in their market area."

**What defines your philosophy towards restaurant ownership/management?** "In order to compete with the corporate giants, we must attract and keep good people in our organization. Every person that is hired is important personally to me and the job they perform is important to the success of the operation as a whole."

# HENRY KRISTAL

## EMBERS AMERICA

**Born:** April 20, 1932

**Education:** Central High School, attended the University of Minnesota for a year but then joined the U.S. Navy (1951-1955).

**Family:** Wife: Cheryle, Children: Jody, David, Danny, Adam and Marissa and seven grandchildren



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With his beginnings as a butcher, Henry entered the restaurant industry by opening the first Embers Charcoal Broiler in 1956 in Minneapolis on Lake Street near Hiawatha Avenue. It had seating for 36 people. All of the recipes were kept in a small tin box in the kitchen. The menu featured a lean, quarter-pound Emberger selling for 45 cents and an Emberger Royal, with thick sliced bacon and cheese, which sold for 75 cents. From these beginnings Embers America was founded in 1998. With the restaurants of Embers America and also Joey's Seafood and Grill, Henry has been able to keep his business philosophy going strong, "Care first about those who work with and for you and their families, and they will care about your customers and make them happy as well. Be honest in all respects. Treat suppliers fairly and they will treat you fairly." Henry has served on the Boards of the Minnesota Restaurant Association and Hospitality Minnesota and also served as President for both.

### Fun Facts:

**Favorite food served at your restaurants?** "The 8 oz. Emberger Royal, which I think is just the best hamburger around, and at Joey's one of the salmon dinners."

**You couldn't pay me to eat/drink:** "There is virtually no food I won't try or any drink I won't try (if you doubt that, ask Cheryle). If you don't try different things, you can't develop new taste sensations."

**What do you feel is your legacy to the industry?** "Help your employees grow to success, help others in the business to get started and succeed and be involved in society in a way that things will be better when you leave that society than they were when you entered that society."

# NICK MANCINI

## MANCINI'S CHAR HOUSE



**Born:** December 11, 1926, has one sister, Bertha

**Education:** Jefferson Grade School and then Monroe

**Family:** Wife: Mary Ann, Children: Pat, John, Gina, and Nick, Jr.

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The Pioneer Press declared Nick Mancini “St. Paul’s favorite restaurateur.” He is perhaps the best known and most successful restaurateur in Minnesota. Nick opened Mancini’s Char House and it grew from a little bar in 1948 to what now is considered one of the cultural centers of St. Paul. Nick is part of the appeal and attraction of this family business. Customers recall Nick strolling from table to table (with or without his accordion) seeing if refills were needed on wine, a birthday needed extra attention with cake or just to say hello. From spumoni ice cream to herring on crackers, everyone has a favorite at Mancini’s. For many the favorite reason for coming back has been Nick. His sons continue the legacy with love and pride. “. . .I look up to the greatest man I ever knew. Everyone has a story about my father and how he touched their lives. . .How do you replace the greatest guy of all time? You don’t, you can’t. We won’t try,” says son, Pat.

### Fun Facts:

**What defines your philosophy towards restaurant ownership?** “Knock yourself out for the customer.”

**How do you feel the restaurant industry has changed?** “Too much focus on themes and not enough on the customer in your seat.”

**If you could give some words of advice to someone wanting to become a restaurateur, what would they be?** “Love it everyday you’re at the business. Keep your place clean. Handle the small stuff right away and don’t sweat it.”

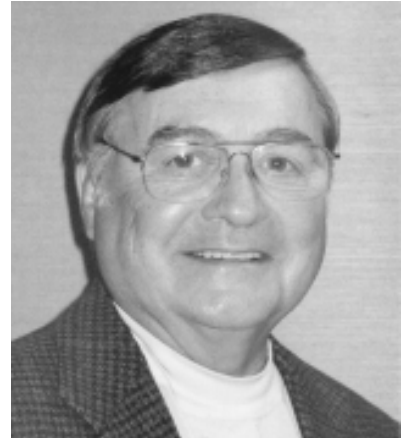
# PAT MURRAY

## MURRAY'S

**Born:** July 10, 1940, the only child of Marie and Arthur Murray

**Education:** St. Thomas Academy and University of St. Thomas

**Family:** Wife: Joyce, Children: Tim, Tina, Jill, Megan, Jamie and nine grandchildren



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Patrick Murray grew up in the restaurant industry, as his parents opened Murray's in 1946. Pat has admitted he's never had any other job outside of ones at Murray's, with the exception of being a batboy when he was in high school for the Minneapolis Millers, a Triple-A minor league baseball team. He started his legacy in the back of the house washing dishes. Through his years of managing the "unofficial Minneapolis landmark," Pat has seen the industry change as the days of the three-drink lunch have gone by and chain restaurants have become a larger part of the restaurant landscape. But his philosophy for success still holds true. "Always give the best possible product at the best possible price and pay your employees the best possible wages."

### **Fun Facts:**

**Favorite food served at Murray's?** "Silver Butter Knife Steak and garlic toast. They come and ask for that."

**You couldn't pay me to eat/drink:** "Oh gosh! (Laughs) I eat most everything now. I'm not a great eater of seafood with heads on it. Don't get me wrong, I like fish. I just don't like it when it comes out with the head and tail on it."

**If you could give some words of advice to someone wanting to become a restaurateur, what would they be?** "First, they must have a passion for the industry. If they don't have a passion they need to get out. The work is hard ... lots of hours. If you don't have it in you, you're not going to be successful because you aren't going to put the time and effort into it."

# REUBEN PALM

## PALM BROTHERS - STRATEGIC EQUIPMENT & SUPPLY CORP.

**Born:** January 21, 1928

**Education:** Blake School, Harvard (Class of '50) and post-graduate work at the University of Minnesota

**Family:** Wife: Jan, Children: Jim, Tom, Mike, Rick, Mark and 10 grandchildren



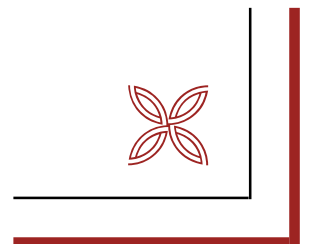
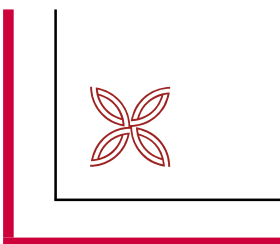
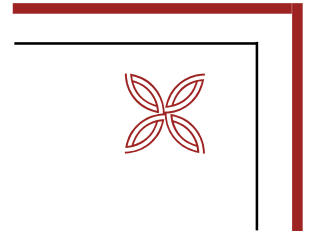
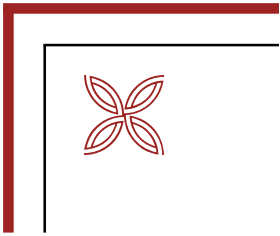
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When Reuben started in the foodservice supply industry, he sold soda fountains to drugstores. This was the era when F.W. Woolworth was the largest food company in the world and only the U.S. military furnished more food. This was an era without fast food restaurants, when Ray Kroc called Palm Brothers to buy “multi-mixer” milkshake machines well before anyone had ever heard of McDonalds. This was a time when microwave ovens were the size of refrigerators. Reuben believed it was important to become involved in the industry and not just sell equipment. This knowledge and involvement made it possible for Palm Brothers to do a better job for their customers. Reuben served as a Board Member for the Minnesota Restaurant Association and was active with Day at the Capitol as well as chairing the UP Show Exhibitor’s Committee. Palm has lived in Minnetonka Beach for the past 45 years and is a former Minnetonka Beach Mayor.

### Fun Facts:

**What are some of your personal achievements?** “I have served on the Orono School Board, was Mayor of Minnetonka Beach, President of the Lafayette Country Club, Trustee for the Minneapolis Foundation of the Kiwanis Club. All have been very interesting and rewarding.”

**If you could give some words of advice to someone wanting to become a restaurateur, what would they be?** “Have a good knowledge of accounting, a personality to handle people and be willing to work long hours.”



  
**MINNESOTA**  
**RESTAURANT**  
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