

Greenwich Sentinel

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First Bank of Greenwich Community Corner Family Comes First in Cos Cob

By RICHARD KAUFMAN

Since the 1950's, the Caravella family has been a steady presence in the heart of Cos Cob.

It all started with Lou, the unofficial mayor of Cos Cob and former town tax collector, who opened a stationary store in 1953 at 232 E. Putnam Ave. He later sold the business in 1988. His son, Randy, opened Randy's Wines a year earlier at 230 E. Putnam Ave., which has served the community for the past 32 years.

Randy said he originally wanted to enter the sports field, perhaps as a broadcaster, but was drawn to Cos Cob after helping his father run the stationary store. He was approached about buying the previous wine store, and the rest is history.

"It just happened, and it's 32 years later. It's been remarkable. It's been a lot of fun, and you

Habitatgreenwich opened its doors in July of 2018.

"There's always been a Caravella presence on the block," Randy said, noting that his father and his sister worked for him at times in the wine store.

"I wouldn't want to be any place else. I love the people of Cos Cob, and I love the vibe. This is home to me," Kim added.

Habitatgreenwich is an original concept shop, design philosophy and lifestyle brand. Kim supports artisans around the globe by featuring carefully curated furniture, lighting, accessories and gifts which are meant to enhance one's home habitat or surroundings.

"Every piece in the store has a story," Kim said, explaining that her favorite part of interior decorating is seeing a finished project and a client's reaction. "It's a puzzle. You see an empty shell, and you get into a client's head and



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First Bank of Greenwich Senior Vice President and Chief Lending Officer, Evan Corsello; FBOG VP and Retail Banking Manager, Emily Newcamp; Randy Caravella; Kim Caravella; FBOG President and CEO, Frank Gaudio.

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meet a lot of people. It's afforded me the luxury to travel to places like California and Italy to visit wineries and make friends and build relationships," Randy said. "It's been a very rewarding experience."

So when Randy's wife, Kim, an interior decorator for over 30 years, wanted to open up her own brick-and-mortar store a few years ago, there was only one logical place: 234 E. Putnam Ave.

then you pull in your experience and your expertise," she added.

Both Kim and Randy are dedicated to the community outside of their businesses. Randy, a member of the Representative Town Meeting, is a founding member of the Greenwich Athletic Foundation, and currently serves as treasurer. Recently, the GAF awarded Greenwich Public Schools with a \$120,000 gift to

shore up the failing bleachers at Cardinal Stadium.

Kim gives back to various local non-profits, and runs the gift shop at the Greenwich Botanical Center.

"My father helped people in this community for years. With all of the things we're doing, we're trying to make the town a better place. We're a community, and we need to stay a community," Randy said.

Because of their community involvement, the Caravellas have a relationship with the First Bank of Greenwich. Both Lou and Randy are on the FBOG Advisory Board.

"I started with the FBOG

probably four months after they opened. The bank really has become a vibrant place," Randy said. "We're thrilled to have a community bank here [in Cos Cob]."

FBOG President and CEO, Frank Gaudio, said the Caravellas have been essential to Cos Cob.

"Randy has been very influential for me in working with the people of Cos Cob. Now that his wife has joined and opened her business, I'm very happy about it," Gaudio said, noting that he used to own retail stores of his own. "I know what it's like to run a store and be in the community. They're great for Cos Cob."