

## **Q & A with Jennifer Wilcox**

**By: Shorter McCook**

Jennifer Wilcox, a graduate of Le Cordon Bleu College of Culinary Arts Atlanta, serves the community as a local business owner and chef.

**Q: So what would you say your experience is like having a local business in the Athens/Watkinsville area?**

A: So it's awesome. It's all about community. That's the like the number one thing and you got a lot of people that have come in from, especially we're Oconee County and Jeremy and I are from both of us went to school in Oconee County, all through school and graduated from there and so it is very tight knit. And Athens is funny cause it seemed like such a big town but reality is the col- when the college students leave, we're pretty small town, too. So definitely you got to stay focused on the community 100% that has built us up that has kept us we're in business for we're going in or-or we'll have our sixth birthday this June. And so that will be that's a pretty big accolade for us. We're pretty proud of it because it's hard for small business, especially going through COVID and being a food business. But yeah, so community focused is number one priority. Number two- just getting the job done and making sure people are happy. We worry about the rest of it later. We worry about marketing later. We need marketing help. I know there's things that we need to do better but right now if we just keep our customers content, we we'll keep we'll keep trucking.

**Q: So you think that the like local business community is a good community?**

A: Absolutely. If you can get with local business community around here, it's a its an awesome thing. There's definitely a big camaraderie. I guess you could say. There's several local res-restaurants in Watkinsville that like I touch base with a couple times a week, they touch base with me, everybody just checks in – Everybody doing okay? Does did you forget something on your truck? Do you need me to order something for you? You know, it's it's very centric. We work together.

**Q: Can you tell me a little more about owning a small business during COVID?**

A: We were super blessed because the drive thru we had constant traffic. People didn't want to cook. People who are afraid to go to the grocery store. I had customers, especially some elderly customers of mine, and they they literally came and got food from me every single day. Because that's how they didn't want to go in public but they trusted us and so as far as it went, we- it was me, Jerem, my mom and my dad for about, I don't know two months. And then we finally started getting some of our kids back. We brought some our boys in to help us but that was had to be restricted and weird because of the six foot thing. So that was kind of a challenge to get around. And then we-we just kept trucking. What was awesome to me, the experience that we got to have is we got to talk to people that most people most people were shut away in the house. You know, we didn't have that opportunity. We we talked to our customers that were coming through the drive thru. And it was it was amazing to hear what everybody else's thoughts were at that time, too, because everybody was really on the same page and you could get the vibe of Oconee County was they were they were a little they were well behaved.

*Comments trimmed for length and clarity*

## **Multimedia Element**



Jennifer Wilcox, co-owner of The Picnic Basket Meal Market, poses for a picture in the Phi Mu kitchen on Feb. 7. (Photo/Shorter McCook)

### **Source Info**

Jennifer Wilcox

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### **Interview Proof**

Otter Link - [https://otter.ai/u/rBLCX9paFkNVH57GAdNr\\_i4\\_4C8](https://otter.ai/u/rBLCX9paFkNVH57GAdNr_i4_4C8)

Notes



Jennifer Widdox  
706-207-9653

- LE Gordon Blue ATL ↙ look it up w/ full name  
8:00

1:08 → partner

203 → day-to-day

I really like  
community

(quote)

good answers

4:03

5:07

- parents  
drive thru

- COVID

- moving locations

COVID interesting

↓

food business

6:25



Potential questions:

General questions to start it off

- Can you tell me about your day to day juggling the Picnic Basket and being a chef at Phi Mu?

How would you describe your experience owning a local business in Athens?

- Is this what you saw yourself doing when you were younger?

- Would you change anything about the way you operate your business?

- What is the community of local business like? Are you a part of any organizations? (research)

- Do you ever see yourself relocating or expanding your operation?

- What drew you to operate a business in Athens?

- What was your experience like at Le Cordon Bleu? Would you ever go back to Europe to work?

in ATL  
Not relevant

Research:

Our goal at the Picnic Basket is to provide convenient top quality fare at an affordable price to accommodate the lack of quality time the modern day family faces. We call ourselves a Meal Market. Think of a grocery store where you pick up your goods already washed, chopped and prepared and cooked into a delicious meal. All you have to do is heat and eat! The bonus we add is all this is done by a local chef. Our meals are sold in portions of 2 servings to accommodate the size of your household or appetite. The selections change on a daily basis depending upon seasonality of product and consumer requests/demands. Since we are a market and not a restaurant - we will not have a set menu. We will offer our daily selections on this website and on our social media pages.

Run by 2 homegrown local Oconee natives. Our Chef is a graduate of Le Cordon Bleu 2005. After many years of working in different styles of service & cuisine - she landed her dream job as an in-house private chef with UGA's sorority market, in addition to private catering work she did for many years. The 2 bring over 20+ years of business management experience as well as partnering in past ventures.

## **Reflection**

Our first major interviewing assignment offered a lot to learn from. I realized from this assignment the importance of researching before conducting an interview. I read about the background of my interviewee before I went to see her. Since I did that, I was able to ask more detailed questions from the beginning, rather than trying to get to know her from scratch. I also learned the importance of being relaxed during an interview. My interviewee was very easy to talk with, and I found that this made the interview seem much more conversational than formal. I know this will not always be the case, but it was nice for this particular instance.

## **Reporting and Writing Checklist**

Completed in eLC

## **Why I Wrote This Story**

This story was our first assignment in my first reporting class at the University of Georgia. It helped me gain the confidence to interview people I had never met before, something that will help me in the future as a public relations professional. It showed me how to operate in a professional way in the field while still enjoying myself and getting to know a new person.