

# Dunning's Market celebrating 25 years as H-F community staple

BY CARRIE STEINWEG  
csteinweg@hfchronicle.com

Maureen Mader celebrated a quarter century of ownership of Dunning's Market, but the business itself goes back more than six decades. It was established in 1958 in Homewood, and Mader is the business's second owner.

The market has seen many changes over the years (including surviving a pandemic) and is on its third location. There was a time not long ago that Mader was thinking of closing shop and moving on, but she says she has found a renewed energy and passion for what she does.

## Becoming the new owner

When Maureen Mader first bought the business, it was located on Dixie Highway.

"When I first bought it, it was a meat market. That's one thing I didn't really realize when I bought it. Then I learned how to cut meat and use a band saw," she explained. "Everyone knew it as a meat market."

Mader had been a nurse, and in previous owner Jack Dunning's final days, she had helped with his care. She signed papers to buy the business, and Dunning passed away that night. His widow continued working at Dunning's for several years.

"Sometimes it feels like you're put on a path," said Mader. "Something is put in front of you and you're supposed to take it."

## A new era

Once Mader took over the business, she kept the meat part of the business that people had known and loved and started adding to it.

A move was made to Cherry Creek Shopping Center on Governors Highway where the business remained for many years. Then in 2018, Mader relocated to the current storefront in downtown Flossmoor.



Eric Crump/H-F Chronicle

Dunning's Market owner Maureen Mader is flanked by a large balloon display setting the celebratory mood during her 25th anniversary customer appreciation event on Saturday, May 14.

"We started with the meat and made a few salads here and there. Then we started making more food. Then started catering and then had wine. Then one day someone asked for a sandwich," she said. "Then we just did custom sandwiches and had no menu. After that I thought we should do a sandwich menu."

"It has kept evolving from there. I said goodbye to the band saw. At the new store, I didn't feel like I wanted to continue doing that. We're now a specialty shop with a little café. We have wine, cheese, sandwiches, coffee, charcuterie."

Over the years she's had numerous nieces and nephews who have worked

with her (she's one of 11 kids and has a big family) and her son currently works with her on a part-time basis. He's also an artist and illustrator who does all the graphics for the market.

## New location, new energy

Four years ago, Mader was ready to close the store and retire, but when she discovered an empty storefront at 1050 Sterling Ave. in Flossmoor, she was inspired.

"I was really just tired, but I feel differently now. The business has a completely different vibe," said Mader. "I now feel a new sense of energy. I changed things a little and got rid of what wasn't working

for me and kept what was working for me."

Retiring isn't even a thought for Mader anymore.

The meat hasn't gone away completely, and you'll find pre-orders of steaks available from time to time, like the much-requested tomahawk steaks.

Meat dishes are also found in supper club meals — prepared meals that you can take home and bake that are designed for busy people who don't have time to do all the prep work but want to enjoy a gourmet meal at home.

Those salads that she added on a whim have become wildly popular. The chicken salad is a signature item that they sell about 250 pounds of weekly, both at her store and at Sunrise Health Food stores.

The move to the new place also enabled Mader to do some fun events like a chef battle that has been held in the summer and a fundraiser for autism in the fall.

"Changing the focus of the business has given me the chance to do more things like this," she said.

Her favorite part of her time in business has been interacting with people.

"I love getting something delicious for people, and it doesn't matter what it is. It can be ice cream or a sandwich or a particular spice or a Spanish salami, but when you get them that thing that is so special to them and they love it, it's just the best. The customers are amazing," she said.

She has a huge sense of gratitude for everyone who comes in the door and praises her community for making sure that she stayed open through the pandemic.

"My customers had my back. I just want to express how much gratitude I feel for the opportunity to do what I love to do for so many years," said Mader.

Dunning's website is <https://www.dunningsmarket.com/> or contact Dunning's at 708-799-5151.

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