

Rick Barton
Joyce Dombourian
63 Versailles Blvd.
New Orleans, LA 70125

May 10, 2002

Board of Directors
Galatoire's Restaurant
209 Bourbon Street
New Orleans, LA 70130

Dear Sirs and Madames:

Along with a lot of other Galatoire's regulars we are writing to protest the recent firing of Mr. Gilberto Eyzaguirre, one of your long-time waiters. Gilberto has waited on us for many years. He was our backup waiter during the years that Randy Berkshire worked at Galatoire's, and since Randy's departure, Gilberto has been the waiter we always ask for first. Gilberto has always given us prompt, attentive service and, like Randy before him, has always made an evening at your restaurant special.

Coming on top of your new management's refusal to let Randy return to Galatoire's after his hasty decision to retire, the dismissal of Gilberto seems nothing short of alarming to us. The privilege of asking for a waiter and the special attention Galatoire's waiters were always allowed and encouraged to bestow upon their local customers were central to Galatoire's enduring charm for so many of us who ate there over and over again from year to year and decade to decade.

In short, members of the board, the cold back management showed to Randy even after personal appeals were made by his customers on his behalf, and the decision now to dismiss Gilberto, are emblems of a cut-throat style of business administration that is showing itself at Galatoire's in other ways as well. Once, among the fine dining restaurants in New Orleans, Galatoire's was an economic bargain. It no longer is. Galatoire's food has usually been excellent, but it is spotty now in the way it once wasn't. There is, moreover, a definite feeling on the floor that the new management team doesn't care about local patronage. A \$300 meal we had there with friends from New York in March was less than satisfactory in most every regard.

Even in its heyday, good as the food routinely was, the charm of Galatoire's lay in its ambience, the way in which the dining experience felt special and the managers and waiters endeavored to make their local customers feel personally welcomed. For twenty-five years, we spent every special occasion at Galatoire's, every birthday and anniversary, every Valentine's. We celebrated our promotions there and the publication of each of my books. But under your new leadership Galatoire's has changed so dramatically that for the first times in our adult lives we have celebrated a birthday and a Valentine's meal somewhere else in the year 2002. Now that Randy and Gilberto are gone, I don't know that we shall ever return.

If you are unaware of what your new management team is doing to your restaurant, then you should know. If you do know and if you endorse the changes, then you have decided to turn Galatoire's into just another tourist restaurant. That's your privilege, of course, but we lend our voices to a large local chorus singing the praises of a dining experience that was central to our lives, one that if you let it disappear, we shall miss with all our hearts.

With sincerest regrets,



Rick Barton

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