

Lupie Duran of Lupie's Café
www.LupiesCafe.net
words & photos by: Ellen Gurley

This month, we are celebrating a woman beloved in our community, Miss Lupie Duran. If you have been in Charlotte for any amount of time you have probably eaten at Lupie's Café. If you have not, shame on you. Stop reading this article and go get some home-cooking. Lupie has been in business for twenty eight years. Nothing has changed a bit since the beginning and nothing ever will. Consistency is queen at Lupie's. You get the same food year after year and sometimes even the same faces. These faces are the people that Lupie really cares about. There are a number of framed photos of her extended family (present and past staff) on the largest wall in the café. In her opinion, they make Lupie's what Lupie's is today.



A humble woman, who has touched the lives of so many Charlotte people, works at her own restaurant; greeting and seating and ringing folk up. This says a lot about this owner; despite her success she is not above but right there beside her employees and customers. Being located right on the line of Grier Town and Elizabeth, she knows class division but doesn't ascribe to it. Bankers, barbers, rockers and socialites all dine here ... together. A strong advocate of the disenfranchised groups she still rubs elbows with the more affluent people in town. People are people to Lupie who has also supported the LGBT community and assisted other single moms, like herself (myself being one of those women).

Lupie is a strong and loyal woman. As a child of only eleven years, she was taking care of her three younger brothers and a mother who was bedridden with Multiple Sclerosis. She is stubborn and she is capable. She was then, too, but after years of this, her (chosen) godmother made sure they all stayed together in Thompson's Orphanage. "She said that as long as she had breath, that she would look after us and she did and still does today".



Born Guadalupe, now going by Lupie (after some debate with a worker at the home who thought she should be called Pete), she is a rock of love and support. Having never left Charlotte, Lupie has relationships with so many people in town (not just the Double Door, ANTISEEN, St. Martin's affiliates but so many individuals that she met and kept throughout the years). I love hearing stories of her days of old; the "Fancy Parties", Bongo's Viking funeral (former well-known journalist), and longtime friendship with Mr. Roy (of barhopping fame) known for his phrase "mighty fine".

Refusing to pose for a photograph to accompany this interview, she redirects me to photos of her mother, her friends and all of the paintings of Lupie's Café done by local artists. The two people that Lupie cares for the most are undoubtedly her daughter, Larkin, and her niece Ashley Duran. Some thirteen years ago, the Huntersville location was opened and is run by her family. Now that's what I call a legacy. What's not to love about a woman and a place that you know will always be the same when you see them again; warm, wonderful and home.

**2718 Monroe Rd.
Charlotte, NC 28205
704.374.1232**