

At Age 90, Local Cake Decorator Retires

Kari Mynhier

When I was 4 years old, my grandma dropped a fifty-pound stack of cake decorating books at my feet and said, “There, now, you look through every page of these and tell me which cake you want for your birthday!” My response? “But, grandma, I just want the penguin cake!”

Out of the thousands of cakes my grandma, Inez Mynhier, known to her customers as Iney, decorated in her more than 64-year baking career, perhaps the “penguin cake” was her least favorite. Standing 3 tiers high with hand-crafted sugary penguins, pools of blue royal icing, and a sculpted igloo on top, it was certainly a sight to behold, but even that was no match for Iney’s elaborate wedding cakes.

The first two wedding cakes Iney ever tackled were for her younger sisters. And, having seven sisters and one brother, it seemed she would have been perfectly busy baking for every occasion that her family desired a cake for—from anniversaries to baby showers, birthdays to graduations, and even Christmases to vacations. However, back in the ‘50s, when neighbors saw that Iney was carrying homemade wedding cakes to and from the trunk of her car, word spread fast—and, soon enough, everyone from her small, rural community was knocking on her door,

putting in requests for their own big events.



Above: Iney’s favorite wedding cake setup, which she replicated many times in her career

Below: Another one of Iney’s favorites: a wedding cake late florist Glendora Rathge helped her decorate



Iney always found it ridiculous that these people thought there was something special about the taste of her cakes—“it’s just box mixes and buttercream!”

However, there's no denying that she had mastered the skill of decorating. There was never a request she couldn't do. A wedding cake adorned with motorcycles and tar-colored highway roads? Yep, she did it. A three-tiered fall-themed cake that had to be painstakingly shaped to resemble three stacked pumpkins with hand-molded, hand-painted leaves and stems? Oh, yes, she did that too.

Iney's cakes were so popular that customers of hers actually planned their event dates around her schedule. Sometimes, when she asked a customer when the wedding would be, the response was, "whenever I can get this cake!" Her cakes were also so popular that she never had to "give away" a free cake—that's what she would do for displeased customers, and she never had a single one.

Now that Iney is completely retiring her cake decorating at 90 years old, she has donated all her supplies to... well, me, and I've had a lot of people ask me if I plan to continue her legacy. My response? I'll have to practice the penguin cake first.



Right, top: My very first attempt at doing the famous penguin cake justice

Right, bottom: Iney recently showing off her homemade candy; even though she's retiring cakes, her baking days are never over