***Grand Central Oyster Bar Centennial Spotlight***

**JANET POCCIA: “FLUKE” MEETING HOOKS DREAM JOB AS PRESIDENT OF FAMOUS SEAFOOD EATERY**

For Janet Poccia, a “fluke” meeting in 1990 ultimately turned into the dream job as Grand Central Oyster Bar President and CFO.

One fine day, the Yonkers resident hopped on the Metro North into New York City for a job interview. She crossed paths with quite the observant gentlemen, who handed her a business card saying: “you look like your interviewing, I have the perfect job for you.”

When the original interview she came to town for was a flop, she called the man on the business card – Classic Personnel – and reeled in a position in accounts payable at the world famous Oyster Bar.

Twenty-three years later, ascending the ranks at the century-old restaurant, she runs the renowned seafood eatery, teaming with Vice President Mohammed Lawal (her Yonkers neighbor), Executive Chef Sandy Ingber (who both came aboard in 1990, too), and GM Kevin Faerkin. Talk about a great catch!

As the Oyster Bar celebrates its Centennial this year, Poccia still marvels that “it’s amazing to be a part of it. I love sitting at the counters, you’re right in the middle of it all – the shuckers, the pan roasts being prepared in the original kettles, the hustle and bustle of the customers.”

Growing up in an Italian household in the Bronx with three sisters and a brother, Poccia was no stranger to seafood, shellfish and bivalves. “I loved clams,” she says. “We used to go to Montauk, and I was the only kid in the family who’d eat clams on the half shell with my father.

“But once I tried the oysters at the Oyster Bar, I was hooked,” she laughs, “I don’t eat clams anymore.”

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Poccia does acknowledge that with her daily fill of the delicious cod, haddock, snapper, and favorite oyster pan roast at the Oyster Bar that “I love a great steak, as a kid I was the one who always wanted to eat meat for dinner.”

After her family moved from the Bronx to Yonkers when she was 14-years-old, Poccia attended Lincoln High School and played basketball, volley ball and competed on the track team. She studied business at Westchester Community College located in Valhalla.

Yonkers will always have a special place in her heart, because it’s where she met the love of her life, her late husband Nicky, who passed suddenly last year. Now she’s a single mom to a beautiful daughter Nicole, who’s about to enter Ursuline High School in New Rochelle this fall. “She keeps me going,” says Poccia. “We shop for clothes, workout together, and I take her to tumbling classes because she wants to be a cheerleader.”

Among the Poccia family pleasures include boating on the Hudson, fishing, and trips to the Long Island and New Jersey shore beaches, especially Long Beach Island.

Her favorite movie? The Jimmy Stewart Christmas classic “It’s A Wonderful Life.” No wonder! It’s been a whale of a true-life tale for Janet Poccia at the Grand Central Oyster Bar.

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