

Harriet Dopkin The Classic Catering People

Harriet Dopkin is President and Partner of The Classic Catering People, a full service, off-premise caterer that has brought creativity, integrity and service throughout Baltimore and Washington D.C. for over four decades.

Food has always been in Harriet's genes. Growing up, she was surrounded by strong independent women with a passion for food. After pursuing a degree in the Classics at St. Johns College, Harriet traveled to Italy where a passion for the culinary arts began to blossom. Upon returning to the states, she made her way to the west coast to study Japanese at University of California Berkley. Through her studies at Berkley, Harriet was able to achieve a life long dream of living in Japan. Throughout her travels, the culinary arts always seemed to have an underlying presence, "Living in different parts of this country and the world has certainly provided an education in ingredients and preparation." Being in California during the Renaissance of the food movement ultimately led to a transition into culinary school where Harriet went on to become the first classically trained chef in her family.

Her experience as a personal, restaurant and catering chef preceded her return to the family business in 1991. In addition to overseeing day-to-day operations, Harriet partners with Classic's team of chefs with a vision of honoring food traditions while exploring contemporary tastes and techniques. She spearheaded The Classic Catering People's environmental efforts with the company herb garden in 1992, sourcing local ingredients, implementing composting and recycling and continually seeking greener ways to work.

Harriet is passionate about educating the community about seasonal foods, food issues and food ways. She has been a long time supporter of the American Institute of Wine and Food's program, Days of Taste®, which teaches children about the 'farm to table' connection. She was also instrumental in initiating The Classic Catering People's Cooking Camp Classic, a summer program that empowers children in the kitchen, expands their taste horizons and provides instruction on preparing international meals for themselves and their families.

The Classic Catering People continues to be an advocate in the community, supporting health and hunger initiatives, local hospitals, schools and civic groups. Harriet is a member of the Women's Leadership Council and Tocqueville Society of The United Way of Central Maryland, the Regional Forum for United Way's Healthy Initiative, International Association of Culinary Professionals, International Caterers Association, Slow Food, Women Chef's and Restaurateurs and Chef's Collaborative.

She enjoys gardening, reading, hiking, traveling, motherhood and hosting meals while sharing the joys of food with friends and family.