

FOODSERVICE EAST PRESENTS

SECRETS OF **SUCCESS**

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An ongoing series of interviews with chefs, restaurateurs and foodservice operators, Secrets of Success looks at the paths taken to professional recognition and acclaim.



Darryl Settles

President, D'Ventures Limited, Boston, MA

By Foodservice East

Darryl Settles is the President of D'Ventures Limited, LLC, a business consulting and investment company based in Boston, Massachusetts where he has successfully fused his passions for music and hospitality by transforming unique concepts into acclaimed events and establishments.

Recognized as an innovative entrepreneur and an icon in Boston's hospitality industry, Settles has received a myriad of awards for his leadership and vision over the years, and was most recently awarded the Tiffany "10" Community Award, the Bostonian We-Are-Boston Community Leadership Award and Stuff@Night's 100 Players of Boston's Nightlife.

FOODSERVICE EAST SECRETS OF SUCCESS

FSE: What led you to buy Bob's Southern Bistro in 1990?

SETTLES: I bought Bob the Chef's restaurant as an investment while working at Digital Equipment Corp. as a sales executive. I must admit that I was naïve about the industry at the time and the hard work and dedication required to be successful.

FSE: Boston has had a dearth of great jazz for many, many years. Your Bob the Chef's had it and now, Darryl's Corner Bar & Kitchen in that space will. What are your thoughts on improving the jazz scene in Boston?

SETTLES: I'm not sure about the question, but I think that Boston has a thriving jazz scene and it is home to some of the best jazz musicians in the country. During the last few years, Berklee College of Music has done a fantastic job of getting its students out and about. You see them everywhere now – neighborhood parks, retail sidewalks, corporate and social events and the many venues we have throughout the city.

FSE: Bob the Chef's was a cornerstone of the Roxbury neighborhood – a gathering place and one that drew people from across the city. What's the key to creating a dynamic that allows this to happen?

SETTLES: First, I'd say it was the unique cuisine we had which was Southern cuisine. There were very few places that offered a menu which included items such as Bob's Glorified Fried Chicken, BBQ ribs, collard greens, candied yams, sweet potato pie, etc. Second, it was the wonderful and energetic live jazz music. Guests loved it!

FSE: You've had a varied background. What led you from Digital Equipment to business consulting and investment, urban development, and neighborhood restaurant?

SETTLES: I don't really know the answer to this question other than that I cannot sit still for long. I love chasing new projects and opportunities.

FSE: What would you say is the 'secret' of your success?

SETTLES: Hard work, wonderful friends and a supportive family.

FSE: How has the restaurant scene in Boston changed as you see it since 1990?

SETTLES: Well, we now have maybe have maybe three or four times the number of restaurants in Boston with various cuisines. We also have the bar scene for a mature audience that we did not have in the early 90's. This is something that I am proud and happy about as I promoted that need for the longest time.

FSE: The urbane dynamic is exciting and brings the city's restaurant community up a notch. We need more venues where people of different backgrounds can gather together in a social environment. What are your thoughts on this?

SETTLES: I totally agree!

FSE: What's next for D'Ventures?

SETTLES: I am currently working with two partners to build a boutique hotel in the Back Bay. We are working with the city and Bay Village to get it approved. We are looking for a 2012 or 2013 opening date. Furthermore, I have a joint venture with the Winn Companies called WiSe Urban Development. We are working with nonprofits and Community Development Corporations to renovate and manage their portfolios for affordable housing. Our current project is 94 units in Roxbury and Dorchester.

FSE: Do you cook at all, and if so, what's in your refrigerator at home?

SETTLES: I cook occasionally, but not since taking back my old space to open Darryl's.