



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Pamela Helming

Senator Helming Celebrates Tom Wahl's Avon Selection for New York State Historic Business Preservation Registry

PAMELA HELMING December 21, 2023

| ISSUE: **NEW YORK STATE HISTORIC BUSINESS PRESERVATION REGISTRY**



Senator Helming pictured with Tom Wahl Sr.

Senator Pam Helming was joined today by Tom Wahl Sr. and members of the Wahl family to celebrate the selection of Tom Wahl's Avon for the New York State Historic Business Preservation Registry. The state program highlights businesses that have been in operation for at least 50 years and have contributed to their community's history, heritage, and identity.

Founder Tom Wahl Sr. opened the original Tom Wahl's restaurant on March 19, 1955, on Routes 5&20 in Avon, Livingston County. Wahl went on to create a unique chain of fast-food restaurants in the Finger Lakes region. In 1986, Wahl sold his restaurants to Bill Gray's Inc.

Senator Helming said, "Tom Wahl's Avon is a local treasure for so many families in our region and a symbol of pride for the residents of Avon and Livingston County. The New York State Historic Business Preservation Registry ensures that we recognize those businesses with a longstanding investment in the economic vitality and quality of life in our communities. I thank Mr. Wahl for his spirit of entrepreneurship that has truly made a difference in Avon and the Finger Lakes, for people of all ages, particularly the many young people employed at Tom Wahl's restaurants. And I applaud Bill Gray's for continuing the values and quality established by Mr. Wahl more than three generations ago."

Tom Wahl Sr. said, "Hundreds of young people worked their way through college at this restaurant, and I remain proud of the business I started so many years ago. I am so pleased that Bill Gray's ownership team continues to serve customers quality food with the same great service and attention to detail, and I remain a loyal customer. Congratulations to the staff in Avon for this wonderful recognition."

Jonathan Gonzalez, Bill Gray's Inc. President added, "Wahl's is truly honored to be a part of the New York State Historic Business Preservation Registry. Mr. Wahl founded the company in 1955 and we have worked hard to preserve the tradition to this day. We are fortunate to be approaching 70 years in business."

David LeFeber, Avon Town Supervisor and Chairperson of the Livingston County Board of Supervisors said, "On behalf of the Town of Avon, I would like to congratulate Tom Wahl's for being included in the New York State Historic Business Preservation Registry. Tom Wahl's has contributed greatly to the Avon community. So many people I encounter, when I

tell them I am from Avon, mention they have visited Tom Wahl's and how good the food and experience have been. Many Avon youth had Tom Wahl's as their first employment in the job market. Avon wishes Tom Wahl's many more successful years in business."

Erik Kulleseid, Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation Commissioner said, "Businesses like Tom Wahl's have been part of the lives of generations of New Yorkers and are the backbone of our communities and our local economies. Since we launched the program last year, over 100 businesses have been added to the registry and the program has such a demand that it was recently expanded to accept more nominations from State elected officials to recognize more historic businesses in their districts. We look forward to seeing this remarkable registry continue to grow!"

Also recognized for her leadership was Melissa Perkins, General Manager of Tom Wahl's Avon.

For more information on The New York State Historic Business Preservation Registry, go to:
<https://parks.ny.gov/historic-preservation/business-registry/default.aspx>

###