

Bojangles' Famous Chicken 'n Biscuits ^[1]

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By Kelly Agan, N.C. Government & Heritage Library, 2017

Sometime around 1975, Richard Thomas, a former president of Kentucky Fried Chicken and a millionaire, opened and operated a fried chicken restaurant in Charlotte, North Carolina called Sunny's. At the same time, Jack Fulk operated a Hardees in Wilkesboro where he was credited with introducing the restaurant's scratch-made biscuit.

Unfortunately, the Sunny's did not do very well. Then Fulk and Thomas met and decided to invest and join together in a new restaurant venture in Charlotte. On July 6, 1977, Fulk and Thomas opened their first quick service fried chicken restaurant on West Boulevard. The restaurant was walk-in but had no tables for dining. They featured a crispy and uniquely cajun-spiced fried chicken, and shortly after introduced Fulk's soon to be legendary biscuit.

The winning chicken 'n biscuits combination launched the restaurant that became Bojangles' on a trajectory of success, and a year later in 1978 the first franchise was launched. The chain expanded throughout the South in the 1980s and 1990s and has remained a largely regional operation. By the mid-1980s, both gentlemen had sold their interest in the company. There have been a number of subsequent owners since then, including most recently private equity firms Falfurrias Capital Partners and Advent International. In 2015, the company filed for its first initial public offering of stock.

Although the company has remained largely in the southern United States, it has also opened restaurants in Washington, D.C., Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, China and Ireland. In 2014, Bojangles' opened its 600th shop on Galleria Road in Charlotte.

Jack Fulk, originally from Davidson County, retired from Bojangles' in the mid-1980s and sold his interest in the company. He later operated a franchise in Jonesville. He died on March 30, 2011 at age 78. Richard Thomas was an executive at Kentucky Fried Chicken prior to creating Bojangles' with Fulk. At various times, he also owned Wendy's and Pizza Hut restaurants, among others. He later moved to Atlanta and redirected his interests toward healthier eating and opened a healthfood restaurant. It was reportedly his 350th restaurant venture. He passed away early in 2017 at the age of 82.

Resources:

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