



**James "Jim or Jimmy" Sawyer**, son of A. Robert (1913-1984) and Mary Elizabeth (Turrill) (1918-1998) Sawyer, was born 27 October 1953, Michigan. Jim had 5 siblings; JoAnn, Mary, Margaret, Allen and Laurie. Jim graduated in 1971 from Okemos High School.

In 1973 Jim married Cynthia Lynde McNitt. Cynthia was a 1969 Okemos High School graduate.



According to his most recent Facebook page Jim had been manager of Sawyer's Gourmet Pancake House, Lansing and

[\*Lansing State Journal, March 15, 1990\*](#)

## Omelette maker breaks eggs to keep tradition

By TED KLEINE  
Lansing State Journal

**T**he North Town Grill is a cook's restaurant. Owner Jim Sawyer has put shrimp in the omelettes, peanut butter on the French toast, and his friends' paintings on the walls. "You don't usually get food we serve here," Sawyer said. "This is the kind of stuff we eat at home."

But then, Sawyer grew up in a home where they spread peanut butter on their pancakes. That childhood experience inspired his Peanut Butter French Toast, which has peanut butter grilled right into thick-battered French toast.

"My grandmother, who I got

### On dining

#### Restaurant

#### North Town Grill

■ 520 E. Grand River Ave.

■ Hours are 6 a.m. to 2 p.m. Tuesday-Friday; 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday, Sunday.

■ Breakfasts and lunches from \$2.

the recipe from, she always ate peanut butter with our pancakes," he said. "I did, too. I thought everybody did that." Apparently, nobody at home ever told Sawyer not to play with his food, because now he has

set himself up as a leading researcher in the field of breakfast arts and sciences. A few weeks ago, he put chocolate chip pancakes and butterscotch pancakes on the menu.

"I actually sold more of the butterscotch than the chocolate chip," he said. "I just put whipped cream on them."

Sawyer's masterpiece, his greatest contribution to Sunday morning, is the North Town Delight, a pancake stuffed with sliced bananas, pecans, and blueberries, and topped with hot blueberry compote.

As an omeleteer, Sawyer also breaks new ground, along with a few eggs. The Hong Kong Omelette is filled with shrimp, bean sprouts, pea pods, onions and green peppers.

That's not a regular menu item, but the blue mushroom omelette, filled with bleu cheese, is, and so are the Mexican and vegetarian omelettes.

Sawyer even has a set of vegetarian lunches, which he calls Vegetarian Delights. He was a vegetarian himself for four years, until he got stuck with some Norwegian mountain people "who eat meat all the time."

Ethnic foods are also on the lunch menu, including Mexican dishes, which are practically mandatory for restaurants on the heavily Hispanic north side.

There is a touch of the old hippie in Sawyer, who once managed the Hearthstone Bakery, a food co-operative. But only a touch. If the revolution ever came, he would be a cook.

The Grill is in the oldest part of Lansing, a few blocks from the site of the city's first house. It's a narrow F&C (formica-and-chrome) joint, and almost every table is by the window. As for the art gallery, it is now limited to contributions from friends and relatives. Doug McNitt, Sawyer's father-in-law, donated a beachscape and a wood sculpture of three Biblical characters escaping from the furnace of perdition. One friend gave a felt-tipped drawing of Clint Eastwood as The Man With No Name, and another donated a colorful, vibrating painting called "The Nature of Color: Beneath Itself."

"I'd like to eat in a restaurant like this," Sawyer said, "and I do, everyday."

also had over 30 years experience in real estate. In 2019 he was associated with Eastwood Reality, LLC.

At the time of his death, 21 September 2019, Jim was living in Haslett. Final



arrangements were handled by Riley Funeral Home, Lansing. There were no services.

*1971 Okemos Tomahawk*



Jim's passing was reported by Tricia McGilliard Hedin, class of 1971.