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Lawyers In The News

Book Review: Attorney Samples 'Divine Food' In *Tar Heel Barbecue – Manteo to Murphy*

Winston-Salem lawyer Jim Early Jr. has written what may be — no, is — the masterwork on North Carolina barbecue and the places that serve it.

Tar Heel Barbecue – Manteo to Murphy, with photos and illustrations by the author, will benefit Special Olympics of North Carolina. All the proceeds will go to help Special Olympics provide year-round sports training for people with mental retardation or closely related developmental disabilities.

Early's book reviews 140 barbecue restaurants — called "places" — that he personally visited in an 18,000 mile, six-month odyssey that covered the state from one end to the other, with a side-trip into neighboring Virginia. In all, Early visited more than 200 places, talked to more than 1,500 people, owners, proprietors and customers alike, and sampled innumerable servings of 'cue, slaw, hushpuppies, Brunswick stew and banana pudding to come up with an entertaining and informative guide to North Carolina's "divine food."

To be included, each place had to make its own "core" fixings — barbecue and sauce. The author did not include places that bought barbecue from a wholesaler or used commercially available sauces. Early delineated the differences in the two main styles of North Carolina barbecue: eastern style, typically made from the whole hog, with a sauce made of vinegar, red and black pepper and spices; and the Lexington



Early

variety, made from pork shoulders, with a tomato product, typically ketchup, added to a sauce that might contain brown sugar.

Besides a custom critique of each establishment's offerings, he provides directions on how to get to each establishment and phone numbers and email addresses where appropriate. At least one place doesn't have a phone.

Early's great adventure did not cost him in the waistline either — he actually lost 15 pounds during his six months on the road. By refraining from eating full meals, he was able to sample portions from as many as six places a day, using lemon-water to cleanse his palate between servings.

In addition to his individual reviews, the book has instructions on how to cook a whole hog, recipes for sauces and dips, hushpuppies, Brunswick stew and other associated foods, with tips from the pitmasters. One section, titled "Barbecue Routes," lists the names and locations of barbecue restaurants along major (and minor) state thoroughfares. For instance, starting with Skeeters BBQ House in Canton and ending at Flips in Wilmington, there are 30 restaurants conve-

nient to Interstate 40 from Tennessee to Wilmington. In all, 14 highways are featured in this section.

When not sampling barbecue, teaching food classes, or indulging in his many hobbies from ballooning to hunting and fishing, Early spends about 35 hours a week practicing law in Winston-Salem, with a major emphasis in personal injury, malpractice and employment law.

"Tar Heel Barbecue" (\$14.95, 349 pages) is available at Lowe's Food Stores, and from the publisher at 336-768-2547. The email address for the book is tarheel-bbq.com. Early's email is jearlyjratty@earthlink.net.

— David Blackwell

