



2021
LEGACY
INDUCTEE



LYTTLE BRIDGES CABANISS

Legacy, Restaurateur

Lyttle Bridges Cabaniss was born in 1916 and had a large family with 9 brothers and sisters. Lyttle lost her father at the age of 8, finished the 3rd grade, quit school, and went to work to help support her family. She worked in a mill for several years until she met her soon to be husband, Elmer Bridges (also known as Red) on a blind date. They married in 1932, had a son who died at age 2 and later adopted daughter Deborah Jane Bridges.

It had always been Red's dream to start his own restaurant, so him and Lyttle opened Dedmons Livestock Barn in 1946. Red trained with Warner Stamey, considered the godfather of Lexington-style barbecue. Red & Lyttle's restaurant moved several times, until it settled into the longtime location on Highway 74 in Shelby, NC, and changed the name to Red Bridges Barbecue Lodge.

Red died in 1966 and left Lyttle to run the business. She spent most of her days at Red Bridges Barbecue perfecting the recipes that have made the restaurant a National standard for pork barbecue. Her famous pimento cheese that won her accolades for decades; it continues to be a popular menu item.

Also known as Mama B, Lyttle is considered by many to be the first female barbecue entrepreneur in North Carolina. She worked until she was 80, and died in 2008 at age 91. She was a hardworking, serious, red headed ball of fire but a fun loving woman. She knew the business inside and out, plus she had all her employees working with pride. She left the business to her daughter, Debbie, who is passing it on to her daughter, Natalie, and her son, Chase, making it a rare example of a female-owned barbecue restaurant for three generations.