

Sent: Tuesday, April 25, 2023 8:02 AM

Subject: Re: Barbara Lynch

Some facts from Barbara Lynch:

Barbara Lynch is weathering an onslaught of negative media coverage that appears coincidentally timed to legal action brought by certain former employees who have made false allegations and are represented by the same attorney.

The current batch of stories started with coverage of a “class action” lawsuit contending that employees were denied tips when the Lynch restaurants reopened after the pandemic. In fact, every employee was paid 100 percent of their prior year (pre-pandemic) earnings, and the plaintiffs in that suit earned over \$40 per hour. (The PPP loan forgiveness guidelines only called for 75 percent.) The company got two PPP loans, handled the funds as intended, and they were forgiven. In addition, throughout the shutdown the company maintained continuous benefits and did not collect any premiums from employees.

Then the Boston Globe and New York Times splashed grievances of other employees, represented by the same attorney as the ones in the pay dispute, of a former chef who claims he was fired after a profanity filled exchange with Barbara that was illegally recorded without her knowledge or consent, during which he pledged to bring her down and “drag” her. The chef was not fired, but in fact, after multiple conversations with company officials chose to resign.

The stories, penned by reporters for whom a recording was played of the encounter, included the contention that Lynch skipped a memorial event for a Menton chef who died in his home of a drug overdose. In fact, Lynch was not invited to that event attended by the chef’s family and close friends, but she closed her restaurant so they could have it in complete privacy. Lynch attended a wake for the chef and is extremely saddened by his loss, as well as another young employee who died shortly after him in her home, also said to result from a drug overdose. Substance abuse is a serious and often lifelong issue that many people face, and it was depicted in this coverage without regard for the effects on real people in the real world.

The media has included alleged quotes from the purported audio recording made by an unknown person, which was recorded in violation of Massachusetts’ all-party consent law.

The stories appear to be a coordinated attack by a group of individuals targeting Barbara and the brand she has built over decades. Barbara Lynch currently employs more than 160 individuals in Massachusetts, and has proudly mentored and shaped many high achievers in the industry. For years the company has paid levels of pay and benefits - health, dental, vision, employee assistance program - for employees to build stable, healthy lives and families.

Barbara Lynch remains chef/owner of the company with seven award-winning restaurants and 160 employees, and growing.

Also, this was the statement Barbara previously issued.

From Barbara Lynch:

First I want to address the events at Menton on March 15, I consider my employees part of my family. Losing these two individuals who I cared for deeply and championed was a personal tragedy for me. It is difficult to put that type of loss into words, and finding the strength to comfort the team in the aftermath of those losses was incredibly difficult. I'm human, and looking back, I wish I had the capacity to have handled it better as a leader and as a friend. I continue to grieve for them and for their loved ones.

As a woman starting with zero education or wealth, I have had to work extraordinarily hard to become a respected chef and entrepreneur of seven acclaimed high end restaurants. It is no secret that I have set high expectations for myself and our 160 employees, and developing them to be their best they can be has always been and remains my highest goal and achievement. I now face a range of scurrilous accusations from former employees, the timing of which seems more than coincidental to the pledge by a former chef that he was going to "take me down." Those words were uttered by chef Tim Dearing in an emotionally charged meeting of staff on March 15 when we were all grieving the deaths of two friends and colleagues from the same restaurant in rapid succession, which left us all shaken and devastated.

I take a lot of pride in the teams we built over the years, and I recognize that at times I can be a hard charging boss. I'm grateful for the many loyal stalwarts who remain outstanding employees for decades helping to drive our success in an industry known for its revolving doors. I cannot put out all the fires that flare in this high stress environment and my very modest roots allow me to recognize that I'm far from being above reproach. I make personnel decisions that may rankle those who don't measure up or don't want to commit to true teamwork and service; perhaps some I should have removed sooner. I acknowledge that I am a creature of the alcohol-steeped hospitality and restaurant industry and I am committed to taking responsibility and working on myself. But the fantastical accusations surfacing now - that employees working side-by-side with me on the same shifts did not see - seem designed to "take me down" and lump me in with peers accused of behavior that is absolutely criminal.

I expressly reject the various false accusations lodged against me that I have behaved inappropriately with employees or crossed professional guideposts that are important to me. Early in the pandemic, we fed employees to help them through that time when all restaurants were closed. I have provided coverage for employees suffering from trauma and other challenges and I have mentored chefs that have gone on to national and international renown.

Throughout my life, I have been doubted, but I have learned over the years that with great opportunity comes great responsibility to others. I have endeavored to give employees ample support and development opportunities throughout the years and I will continue to do that.

Judy Rakowsky

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