

# Greta Anderson, 105, co-founder of iconic Buffalo area ice cream shop

- [Dale Anderson](#)
- Nov 20, 2023

Greta Anderson, who founded the first Anderson's Frozen Custard shop with her husband, Carl, in the 1940s and was a smiling presence in the business for more than 75 years, died Nov. 8 in her Amherst home. She was 105.

Born Greta Ida Nelson, she was one of five daughters of Swedish immigrants C. David and Edith Sealander Nelson. Her father was a tool room supervisor for Remington Rand.

She grew up on Mullen Street in the City of Tonawanda, was a graduate of Tonawanda High School and attended national conferences representing the Swedish Evangelical Mission Covenant Church at Jersey Street and Prospect Avenue in Buffalo.

She was working as a beautician in 1941 when she married her childhood sweetheart Carl D. Anderson, who was attending the University at Buffalo Law School. He enlisted in the Navy when he graduated and served during World War II. He was stationed at a military hospital, and they were living in the Bronx when they saw a business opportunity.

A friend in their church was selling ice cream machines. They bought one and started a shop in 1946 on White Plains Boulevard, selling frozen custard and Italian ices. In their first summer, they earned a profit of more than \$10,000, the equivalent of more than \$138,000 today.

Returning to the Buffalo area to be closer to their families, the Andersons opened a shop at Kenmore and Claremont avenues in the Town of Tonawanda in 1947.

"Within three years, they were bursting at the seams, so they bought a lot on Sheridan Drive," her daughter Holly Anderson, president and CEO of the company, told Buffalo News reporter Mary Kunz Goldman in 2017. The couple opened what became their flagship store at 2235 Sheridan in 1953.

In the years that followed, her daughter recalled, the phone would ring once at 8 p.m. in the Anderson home on Belmont Avenue, her father's signal for her mother to walk to Sheridan Drive to serve customers lined up for beef on weck sandwiches – which the shop started offering in 1964 – frozen custard cones and Mrs. Anderson's famous homemade butterscotch.

"Back in the day, it wasn't Anderson's unless you were standing in line," her daughter noted.

Their children took over operations when she and her husband retired in 1983.

"They came to us and said, 'Who wants in? Because we're out,'" Holly Anderson said in an interview for the UB School of Management. "And three of us said yes – one of my brothers who was a restaurateur, another who was an accountant, and I was a teacher."

A second Anderson's shop opened in 1989 at 6075 Main St. in Williamsville, and more locations followed in the 1990s. Currently, there are six. The shops are known for their charitable work and for holding fundraisers for youth groups.

Dividing time in retirement between homes on Grand Island and in Jupiter, Fla., Mrs. Anderson prepared Swedish dishes for large family gatherings and continued to visit the shops. She planted flowers and never missed a chance to serve cones to customers on her birthday every February, when sales benefit Variety, the Children's Charity of Buffalo and Western New York. The company plans to continue that custom in her memory.

At Riverside Baptist Church, Mrs. Anderson was a teacher and leader of the Sunday School and Vacation Bible School and was active in the Good News Club and Child Evangelism Fellowship.

Her husband died in 1997, and she was remarried in 1999 to Ralph G. Chambers, a recent widower and parishioner at her church. He died in 2014.

Survivors include three sons, Jack, Nels and Keith; two daughters, Ann Berley and Holly Anderson; 14 grandchildren; and 18 great-grandchildren.

A memorial celebration will be held in the spring.