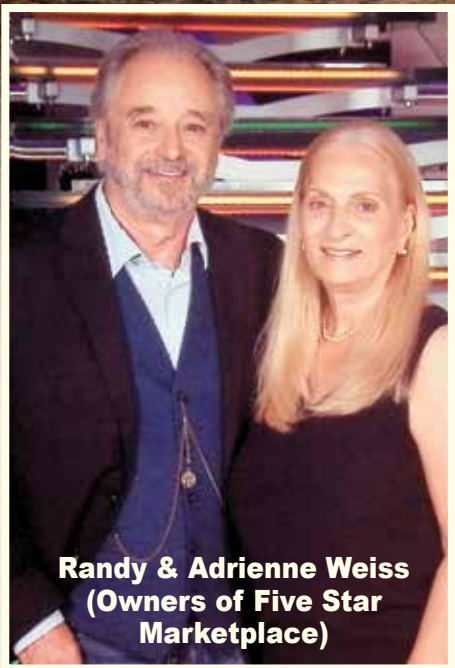


AN IMMIGRANT FAMILY'S FIVE STAR STORY



Randy & Adrienne Weiss
(Owners of Five Star Marketplace)

My name is Randy Weiss. My wife (Adrienne) and I are the owners of Five Star. I have helped my family operate this business since 1975. Many people knew my father (Art Weiss) and his loyal partner (Ben Lipke). Together, they opened the Knox Five Star Food Store across the street from our current location in 1964. I've been in this business since 1975 when we opened the Knox Mall. That's a long time for a business to be operating on the same street corner. I want to say **THANK YOU** to each of our wonderful employees and the generations of loyal customers who have made this possible.

Since we are taking time to celebrate the many years that the Knox Mall and Five Star have been part of Starke County's history, I thought it might be time to tell you a little bit of our family's journey to reach this milestone. I hope you find our story to be worth reading.

Adrienne and I are first-generation Americans. We have witnessed the power of the American Dream, and we are thankful that our parents made their way to this great land. This is our time to honor their memories, their hard work, and show them the respect they deserve as we share our personal history.

My wife's parents came from Italy. Her mother immigrated as a child and feared the name Mussolini until the day she died. Her father arrived from Italy as a teenager and worked for thirty five years in the steel mills. Her brother followed the same path.

My father, and his parents, escaped from Hungary between the violent pogroms against Jews and the Nazi Holocaust. Other relatives were killed or sent to concentration camps before they could get out of the old country and see Ellis Island. Like many immigrants, they arrived with nothing but hope.

Dad had not yet finished the fifth grade when he was ripped out of his homeland. He was unable to speak English. He was forced to begin school all over again in the first grade. Can you imagine the shame and confusion? He was a young, non-English speaking, immigrant child in shabby clothes. Though he should have been in a fifth-grade class, he was forced to attend school with curious little first graders. In America, he struggled throughout first grade and all the way through the fourth grade a second time. Then he had to quit elementary school to help support the family.

My father cleaned meat blocks for fifty cents a week. Eventually, he learned the butcher's trade by working in a small grocery store. Back then, there was no government assistance for immigrants. If a Jewish family didn't have relatives who had already escaped to America, it was a pretty desperate situation. Yet reaching our shores was the best thing that could have ever happened to us.

After his heroic service in World War II, dad returned home and married my mother. It would be a disservice to reduce his war story to a single sentence that ignores the magnitude of his patriotic dedication to America. This nation gave him freedom. Dad fought to preserve it.

My dad wasn't just a soldier. He was a highly decorated war hero in the famous First Special Service Force. These men were the forerunners to the Green Berets, Delta Force, and the Navy SEALs. This will sound very strange to the people who knew my dad through business. But my father was truly a trained killer. He was skilled to kill the enemy with guns, knives, brass knuckles, piano wire, and with his bare hands. He was a Ranger in an elite band of commandos. He passed away in 1998, so he never saw the 2015 ceremony given by the US Congress to show honor to the few remaining survivors of his band of brothers. The unit was given the most prestigious CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL.

This well-deserved honor was given for their historic military feats, deep behind enemy lines. They were often called the BLACK DEVILS because of their nighttime infiltration attacks. With their faces blacked out, these warriors became one of the most feared groups of US fighting men in all of American military history. As the Speaker of the House declared during the award ceremony, "For every man they lost, they killed 256. For every man captured, they took 235." The Nazis labeled them with the name that stuck, THE DEVILS BRIGADE. Their wartime exploits inspired great books and thrilling movies. My dad proudly served in that famous group of violent social misfits. They were rowdy, dangerous, barely controllable gladiators who were only sent on impossible, suicide-like missions to disrupt, destroy, and demolish Nazi capabilities. According to Congress, this very small unit accounted for 12,000 German casualties and captured 7,000 prisoners during the war. In case you didn't notice, yes, I am very proud of the man I called "Dad."

My mother's family had their own harrowing immigrant story. My maternal grandfather literally walked across Europe, by himself, as a young teenager to get on a steamer bound for America. He escaped from Russia when teenage boys were being rounded up for the Russian military. Like my father's side of the family, my grandfather fled to avoid religious oppression. He knew that a forced conscription into the Czar's army was imminent. Even worse, he also knew that meant he would face forced conversion and baptism.

When he arrived, he learned to sew. He worked with his hands, selling clothes. Eventually, he opened his own little tailor shop in Chicago. My mom, her brother, along with her mom and dad lived behind the store. Her father died much too young. His wife Rose, my grandmother, soon moved in with us at our home in Gary. She'd had a rough life. I am very proud of my parents and my grandparents. Her story is worse.

Rose came to America alone as a child of seven years old. Her mother had died. Her father had left to find a new wife in America. She was temporarily left in a Russian orphanage. But that became unsafe. Her aunt realized that she had to get her young niece away from that place. She saved enough money to buy the child a steamship ticket. She grabbed up her young niece with everything the little girl owned. It wasn't much. She had the clothes she

This is one of the two Russian rubles that my maternal grandmother Rose (my Bubbie of blessed memory), gave to our mother, who gave them to my sisters.



These are the cherished treasures of the two wooden dolls little Rose carried to America.

was wearing and two little wooden dolls. Her aunt gave her a loaf of pumpernickel bread, a stick of salami, two Russian rubles, and little Rose was put on a ship to America. She was alone, terrified, confused, with a simple note for her father pinned to her sweater. Her aunt promised to follow as quickly as she could save enough money to buy one more ticket. Tragically, before her aunt could get the ticket to emigrate, she was raped and killed in a Russian pogrom. My mother passed those beloved wooden dolls, with her mother's two rubles to my two younger sisters as cherished necklaces.

There are many types of treasures that one might pursue in life or pass on to loved ones. My advice about wealth is to never lose the riches of your heart in pursuit of the riches of your wallet. And if you are truly blessed, perhaps you can gain both. I am thankful to say that my two younger sisters and I have been blessed to have had immigrant parents who taught us to value the important things above the measurables.

LOVE MY LITTLE SISTERS!

For a long time, my sisters and my brothers-in-law were partners with me and my wife. When they all wanted to retire, instead of chaos and confusion, they graciously allowed me to buy them out in a very kind agreement because I did not want to retire. Many families fight over money. Mine found ways to work together and seek peace. Those things that can be listed on a financial statement may have value. But we would all do better to be intentional about passing on our heritage. That can only be measured through lasting legacies that transcend one generation as it transforms the next.

My wife and I have lived very intentionally to preserve both the tangible and the intangible for our children, our grandchildren, and now, our beautiful great-grandchildren. You might be wondering what all this has to do with a supermarket's anniversary celebration. It's a story that few know. But it has influenced how we live and how we do business. We are proud to be the children of immigrants. And, like my father, we are proud Americans. I thought a few of you might appreciate the background on how our family created a meaningful retail enterprise that an entire county depends on. We believe in God. We believe in America. We believe in our business.

And we believe in this community that has supported our endeavors for so many years.

I had the great privilege of being trained by my dad. I must confess that my life had been on a downward spiral from 1968 through the chaos of rebellion, rock & roll, and drug addiction. In fact, long ago, my dad fired me from working at one of his stores. I swore I'd never be a grocer. I was a musician and a songwriter. And I was definitely headed down a different path at that time of my life, or so I thought.

In 1972, I released my first record in Hollywood. Shortly thereafter, I ran off and eloped with Adrienne on a combination honeymoon/record promotion tour. We started life with a painted up 1964 VW, a new record, and \$600 from the last drug deal I had made. In more ways than you can imagine that tour turned into a life-changing journey. I experienced a miracle. I read a little book that pointed me to Jesus. In an instant, my entire life changed:

- I was instantaneously delivered from drugs.
- My sins were forgiven.
- My music was dedicated to honor the Lord.
- My life and my eternity were forever altered.
- And I was called to preach the everlasting gospel of Jesus Christ.

This must sound like a very strange story. And you may wonder what it has to do with Five Star. Well, please read on.

At that time, when a Jewish person declared faith in Jesus and was baptized, it sent shock waves through their family and the Jewish community. Some Jewish hippies who came to faith during the Jesus revolution were sent to deprogrammers. Others were shunned or considered dead to their families. In 1975, after a long period of being prohibited from communicating with my parents, I was given a very conditional opportunity to have a relationship with them. I was told I must do two things:

1. Go study with the rabbis.
2. And go back to working in the grocery business. (Dad had just completed the new store in Knox and the Knox Mall was being built.)

Those were two things I certainly never wanted to do. But in an effort to restore our broken relationship, I agreed to his requirements. However, this was all subject to two of my own conditions. I promised to do anything my father requested of me, including studying with the rabbis, and also learning every aspect of his business. But this was all with the understanding of two non-negotiables:

1. I would never deny my faith in Jesus.
2. I made it clear that I had been serving in the ministry since 1973. I explained I would remain in ministry, but I would do so on my own time and at my own expense.

As a result of agreeing to his conditions, he and my mom began talking to me again. We entered into a deeply strained, but very respectful relationship. I did my best to do everything he asked me to do. It was very challenging. But the Lord was always faithful, and He helped me.

By 1983, I began the process of buying out my father. It was an overwhelming task. I knew when he was ready to retire that it was important for me to be ready to step up for the family. Throughout the years he was still alive, I did my best to honor him and to faithfully serve him. We didn't always agree about life. We certainly didn't agree about faith. But we always were able to reach agreement about business and the need to respect our employees, appreciate our customers, provide value and loyalty to those with whom we did business, and to serve Starke County in every way we were able.

I must say there were years at a time when my faith was such an embarrassment to my family that we were again forbidden to see them or communicate. These were terribly painful years for all of us. But at no time did I ever regret the decision to follow Jesus or pursue the call of declaring God's love and our soon-coming Messiah. Because of my faith, I know my father was not proud of me. Yet I have always been proud of him, my mom, my wonderful sisters, and of the business he taught me to operate.



Adrienne & Randy Weiss, Roberta & Joe Star (of blessed memory), Nancy & Les Lipschutz

Yes, that is me before Jesus and Adrienne turned my life around.



I have made many records since 1972, but this was my first. I wrote it when I realized I had fallen I love with the girl of my dreams. Apart from the 6 times she went into the hospital to have our babies, we have never spent the night apart in nearly 53 years!



Adrienne with "Malvina," our 1964 VW Bug, which carried us around much of America in our younger days.

So please allow me a few more moments to tell you about how our business began and eventually came to Knox. In 1947, my dad borrowed a small sum of money from a relative and opened a tiny Mom & Pop grocery store in Gary, IN.

That little store faithfully served the community and within a few years it became a small success. Dad cut the meat. Mom ran the register. I was, quite literally, born into the business—her water broke while she was checking out customers.

In 1956, dad sold that store and built a larger one in East Gary. It became a great success! Dad used to let me bag onions and potatoes in the back room. If I didn't cause too much trouble or damage the produce, he would give me a dime to ride the mechanical horse by the front doors. It was in East Gary that Ben Lipke became the store manager, a great friend to my dad, and dad's partner when Knox opened.

I grew up calling him Uncle Ben. That was a difficult habit to break when he became my boss in 1975. (Ben was a kind man and I will always be grateful for his cooperative attitude when my dad wanted to retire and I entered into the process of buying the Knox store.) But success is not the measure of a businessman. Sometimes, it is learned through struggle. Occasionally, it comes through tragedy. Dad's successful East Gary store unexpectedly burned down. PAPER We drove out to the site of the catastrophe. I remember seeing him crying in front of the store as it burned to the ground. We watched helplessly as his dreams and his entire business world came crashing down. But nothing could stop my father. Eventually, he built in another community. He did quite well and that enabled him to finally build the Knox store across the street from our current location.

So many things have changed over the years. But one thing stayed the same. And I hope it never changes. We remain Five Star! There's a reason for that. I want everyone to know how we got our name. As a marketing idea, Five Star always represented a standard of quality. Five Star quality. But for our family, it has always meant much, much more. During WWII, mothers across the country hung small rectangular flags in their windows. Each flag bore a star. One for every child sent overseas to war. In one little immigrant home, there were five blue stars representing five children. All in uniform. All in danger. They were a daily reminder of the weight carried in my grandma's heart. One of her sons, my Uncle Sid, was captured by the Nazis and held in a POW camp. Another of her sons (my dad) snuck away from his unit when he learned of his brother's capture. A Jewish soldier in a Nazi prison camp. Dad knew what that could mean. So, he silently broke ranks in a desperate, futile, dangerous effort to help his family. He was alone. He was lost. And he was behind enemy lines. He had risked his life and his future to save his brother. To my dad, family meant everything! He was unable to find the camp. He got lost in the chaos of war and was uncertain how to find his own way back. Trained to navigate by the stars, he followed them through enemy territory—returning to the brothers-in-arms who had feared him dead. You could say the stars kept him alive.

His brother was eventually liberated and made it home safely. We all thank God my uncle returned with his dignity, his courage, and his love for his country intact. In the years that followed, my uncle would become a partner in that East Gary business that bore the Five Star name inspired by the stars in his mother's window.

Today, our store is more than just a supermarket. It's a cornerstone of the community. Five Star is lifeline. Folks know that Five Star is always dependable. Our amazing employees enable us to remain open 364 days a year to serve Starke County. It is a wonderful reality that many shoppers have come to our store for generations. We provide a place where familiar faces can still greet customers by name. Longtime employees, several with 20, 30, and even more than 40 years of service, stock shelves, cut meat,



The Brunswick community of Gary, IN is where it all began for our family in 1947. Five Star has come a long way since then.

My Mom & Dad (of blessed memory) loved me. They worked diligently so their children could have a better life.



They don't make them like this anymore!

fill produce racks, and scan groceries with quiet pride. This is much more than a job to them. And for all of them, I am grateful.

My father would be proud to know that Five Star still serves many of the same customers, and the same local families, served by Ben Lipke in 1964. I am happy to report that they can still depend on Five Star every day. And Knox knows they can count on us.

Every holiday, we have customers who come in at the last minute because they need one more item for their family gathering. Every occasion, when other businesses are closed, Five Star remains open to make sure every holiday table has all the festival needs they want for their celebrations. Our loyal employees understand and help us keep these traditions alive in our business. And I believe our loyal customers appreciate having a dependable supermarket in the Knox Mall. I know there are bigger, newer stores in other cities. I know we must continue to find ways to improve. Actually, I have plans to do just that. But for now, I owe a debt of gratitude.

I want to thank everyone who has helped us thrive for 50 years. I am also thankful for all of the wonderful businesses serving the County at our Knox Mall. It's a wonderful testimony that so many of the enterprises like Pizza Hut, McDonald's, Taco Bell, and Walgreens have shared our traffic and our commitment to serve Knox for decades. Likewise, I am grateful for the excellent job done by Tractor Supply and Family Dollar, and the other smaller, though extremely important businesses at the Knox Mall. It is wonderful that folks can come to enjoy different types of meals at our restaurants and take advantage of the goods and services available. It is exciting to see the excellent job being done by the newest addition to the mall by the lovely Madison Grace salon. I hope that everyone in Starke County will come by and enjoy the great values advertised during this 50th Year at the Knox Mall Appreciation Sale. While you're here, get to know each business on our corner. We're easy to find, convenient to visit, and we all employ local residents. We all support the local community. And we all do what we can to improve the lives of local families. In closing, I want to give my personal appreciation to every Five Star employee and to each of our great customers.



EAST GARY—East Gary and Portage volunteer firemen pump water into the Five Star Super Market at Portage and Center this morning as the building was destroyed in a \$200,000 blaze. Above, the chiefs of the two departments talk over emergency procedures as two families in the south of the store were ordered evacuated from their homes. Below, rescuers from the two departments move closer to the flames in attempting to reach the heart of the fire. One East Gary volunteer was slightly injured. (Post Tribune photos)



My father's American dream burned to the ground, as seen in this 1960 newspaper article. He had promised the community he would rebuild. Unfortunately, the insurance company made it impossible for Dad to do that. However, I fulfilled his promise in 1985 when I opened up another Five Star Food Store on the same street less than 2 miles away from his original site.



Recently does Mrs. David Weiss, 111 Pennsylvania, place a V-Home sticker in her window beside a service flag with five stars, representing her five sons in their country's service, one of whom is now a prisoner of war in Italy. Anthony Flukowsky, air raid warden, holds in, there was the first sticker to go up in Gary.

This old photograph appeared in the old Gary Post Tribune in 1942 during WWII. That is my father's mother (of blessed memory) showing the flag in her window with stars for each of her five sons who bravely served overseas.



This is our family. God has been good to us and we rejoice in His love.

Thanks for helping me feed my family by allowing us to feed yours!