



UNIVERSITY OF
SOUTH CAROLINA

College of Hospitality, Retail
and Sport Management

Southern hospitality revisited

Whatever happened to Southern hospitality, that well-known if not well-defined quality of local life and lore? Has it gone the way of carbon copies, rotary phones and getting up off the couch to change TV channels? Entered suspended animation? Or was it more myth than reality anyway?

For many, Southern hospitality means friendliness, neighborliness and graciousness, perhaps wreathed in magnolias, flavored with peaches, served with shrimp and grits, collards and black-eyed peas, pimento cheese, boiled peanuts, or an RC Cola and a MoonPie, and delivered with a smile and a drawl. Some visitors and new residents expect to encounter it just as they would fried chicken, post-church socials and Tara from *Gone with the Wind*.

But the world has changed. TV, shock radio and so-called social media have helped transform conventions, etiquette and expectations. Written and oral communication have become abbreviated, altered and accelerated. Fast-food eateries are common, some serving *faux* Southern food that once took hours to prepare — leaving plenty of time to visit. Big-box retailers have replaced mom-and-pop shops, and the swipe of the credit card has replaced the exchange of cash and a handshake.

Read more here: <http://www.thestate.com/2012/07/06/2343648/southern-hospitality-revisited.html#storylink=cpy>

People and businesses have moved to the South from other parts of the country and the world, diluting or regional expressions, manners and the pace of life and making the South is more diverse, less insular and more adaptable. But sometimes civility and accord seem out to lunch. Many of us don't know our neighbors. Hospitality of any variety seems in short supply.

Given the economic importance of tourism and of attracting retirees, entrepreneurs and companies, maybe it's time to revisit Southern hospitality. Residents, visitors and businesses favor communities with a high quality of life, and it is hospitality, not just our sunny skies, that provides the right "climate." Emerging tourism markets rely on the friendliness and graciousness associated with traditional Southern hospitality.

Simply put, Southern hospitality is South Carolina's core brand, and a very effective one at that. Redefine it if necessary, but have it be an attitude, a way of life and even a business ethos; revive it, promote it, and position it globally so that all can recognize, appreciate and share in it. Doubtless the South will continue to change — but such an essential feature should remain part of it.

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