

Old Edwards Hospitality Group Finds New Ownership

Athens Family, now at the Helm of its Companies and Properties

HIGHLANDS, NC (June 17, 2024) — The South’s award-winning collection of hotels and clubs has found new ownership in James and Jessica Whitley of Athens, Georgia. On Friday, June 14, 2024, the sale of [Old Edwards Hospitality Group’s](#) assets was completed between long-time owners Art and Angela Williams and the Whitleys.

Art and Angela Williams purchased [Old Edwards Inn](#) more than 20 years ago after visiting and falling in love with the town of Highlands in their younger years. Over the last two decades, they renovated the original inn and spa, added rooms, restaurants, shops, wedding and event venues, and two golf clubs. A full hospitality group began to grow and Old Edwards Inn and Spa, as well as the [Old Edwards Club](#), has become a beloved destination for families across America.

“As Angela and I entered our eighties (we both turned 82 in April), we began to realize we didn’t have the energy or stamina to continue owning and overseeing this amazing company. But we weren’t willing to hand it off to anyone we didn’t think we could trust to treat it like we did,” says Art Williams, “Only when the Whitleys came to us did we believe we could hand it off with full confidence our friends and guests and members would continue to experience Old Edwards hospitality at the same level of excellence.”

The list of assets in the transaction includes Old Edwards Inn and Spa, [200 Main, Half-Mile Farm](#), Four65, Highlands Burrito, Old Edwards Club, [GlenCove](#), and Norton Ridge. Art and Angela Williams have always been heavily active in Highlands, helping to develop and grow it from an intimate mountain vacation town into one of the most sought-after areas in the south for full-time residents and those looking for an elevated, serene escape from busy lives. The couple still plans on spending time at the various Old Edwards properties with a team and membership base that has become like family over the years.

“Art and Angela have created something truly special. Anyone that has ever stepped foot in one of their properties has surely felt this,” says James Whitley. “They’ve spent the last 20 years pouring themselves into this incredible place – ensuring that every guest and member feels truly taken care of – and setting a bar for hospitality that is studied by hotels, restaurants, and private clubs all over the country.”

James is the Co-Founder and COO of Athens-based [Landmark Properties](#), and he has been involved in the orchestration, design, development, construction, and management of over \$4 billion worth of student housing projects across the United States. Jessica is the Creative Director of Jessica Whitley Studio and leads the design across all the family’s

projects, including their recently opened boutique hotel in Athens, [Rivet House](#). The couple also owns [The Reserve at Lake Keowee](#), a private, mountain and lake club in Sunset, South Carolina.

“We had an immediate connection with Art and Angela,” says Jessica Whitley. “The conversation of us taking over their properties has been a long and thoughtful one on both sides. Our intention is to let this unbelievable team keep doing the same great work they’ve always done and honor the Williams family by being great stewards of the legacy they’ve spent decades building.”

Old Edwards’ President and Managing Director Richard Delany adds, “Old Edwards Hospitality Group has simply changed ownership. All staffing, operations, events, memberships, partnerships, policies, vendors, and contracts remain the same. We are all very excited about James and Jessica Whitley taking ownership and the positive momentum this represents for the future of the company.”

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The Old Edwards Inn and Spa is a member of the renowned [Relais & Châteaux](#) collection of independent hotels and is host to a number of annual events based around food and hospitality. The inn, along with the group’s additional clubs and properties, has a global popularity that draws travelers from around the world to the small mountain town of Highlands, North Carolina.