

WEDNESDAY 8A

Over half a century of beauty

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Hair business is a people business first.

A local beauty shop recently observed a major milestone, serving the community for a half century.

"On Nov. 22, 2017, Barbara's Beauty Shop on Carter Street in Smithville turned 50 years old, and we plan to be here for many more years," said Barbara Fish, owner. "I love what I do for a living."

Growing up in the area, her maiden name was Barbara Wright and she knew what she wanted to do when she grew up. "I always wanted to be a beautician ever since I was a little girl, going to Alma Patterson's beauty shop with my mom, Tisha Brasswell."

After graduating from DCHS in 1966, she attended Smithville Beauty College that same year. She went for 1500 hours. Her beauty instructor was Ed-

monda Stevens. Barbara took her state exam in May of 1967 and Jean Fowler was the lady she took to be her model. After she got out of beauty school she had Tommy Taylor build her beauty shop at 435 Carter Street. She opened it up on Nov. 22, 1967. A couple of her first customers were Dorothy Caplinger and Geneva Taylor. Barbara worked at the shirt factory in town for a couple of years while she was also working at the beauty shop, until she got her business built up, and then went strictly to doing hair.

A lot of her new customers were from the shirt factory. "Doyle Caplinger was my neighbor and close friend that lived across the street from the beauty shop. We have a lot of great memories with him," she recalled. "He would slice turnips and salt them and bring them to the beauty shop to share with my customers. One day we were joking around with him about being hen pecked and later on that day he



Barbara's Beauty Shop has been a mainstay in Smithville since its inception over 50 years ago.

came back to the shop and sat down, crossed his legs and lifted up his pant leg a little and he had taped feathers to his leg. We have laughed about that for years! We have had a lot of fun with him over the years. One day Doyle told me, 'When you were having this beauty shop built I told my wife, Dorothy Caplinger, that Barbara won't ever last as long as it took to build the building. Boy was I ever wrong!' Doyle said, 'you can't say Barbara Fish is a lazy person.'"

She noted that hairstyles have changed a lot since she began in the business. "Hives and real heavy backcombing was very popular when I first started doing hair, the higher the prettier was the style," she said. "I worked back then till 10 and 11 o'clock at night. I've done all kinds of hairstyles over the years from beehives, bouffant, the bubble, bobs, duck-tails, pixies, shags, feathered flips, (Farah Fawcett do), mullets, spiked, rat-tails, bow cuts, fade buzz cuts, comb overs, hair colors, and highlights. I've put hairpieces in hair to make hair look a lot bigger and to look thicker. We have done a lot of perms over the years from short hair to

very long hair. Roller sets and sitting under the dryer is all we did until 1980 and then blow drying and curling iron became popular, but we still have a lot of customers that still do roller sets, because it usually stays fixed for more days."

She pointed out that she was trained using a razor. "Razor cutting is what I was taught in beauty school and it's all I did till scissor cuts became popular and I had to teach myself to clipper cut, because I was never taught to clipper cut in beauty school," she revealed. "We didn't start men's hair till around the 1990's and a lot of women liked the bottom of the back of their hair clipper cut to. The first man I ever gave a perm to was, Donnie Caplinger. Over the years, we do almost as many men's hair as we do women's hair."

They say a lot of people remember where they was at, and what they was doing, when 9-11 happened

"I remember one of my men customers Gordon Certain came in the shop to get a haircut and he asked me, 'did you hear what just happened' and I said no, and he said a plane had just flown into the World Trade Center," she recalled.

"It was a very scary time. My husband Charlie and I had just got back from Hawaii when the 9-11 attacks happened."

Speaking of Hawaii, she said one of her customers made it possible for her to go overseas. "Another of my men customers named Bob Kalish is the reason we got to go to Hawaii. He had a lot of built up travel miles that was from his job and I was cutting his hair one day and I told him I would love to go to Hawaii, but probably won't ever get a chance, and he said 'well if you want to go I will give you my travel miles that I will never use.' I couldn't believe it. It was definitely a once in a lifetime trip, that one of my sweet customers made possible."

Age doesn't matter when it comes to whose hair she cuts. "We have done several ladies over the years that were 100 years old and older. A few of them are Katie Bain, Mollie Taylor, Hazel Hibdon, and Lily Lawson. When our customers are not able to come to the beauty shop and are in retirement homes and nursing homes; we go to them and do their hair. And if they pass away we also do their hair at funeral homes."

She recalled the many who have worked with her over the years. "I have

had a few people that have worked in the beauty shop with me over the years. They are Sandra Adcock, JoAnn Page, Connie Cook, Beverly Sheffler, and the one that is still with me and has been for 27 years, since she was 19, is Donna Robinson. Diane Kirby filled in for me when I was on pregnancy leave in September of 1981. I've had two manicurists in the past working here for a while, Doyleene Caplinger and Ann Cripps."

Affordability has always been important in her book. "For as long as I have owned this beauty shop I have, and always will, keep our prices low and always will use high quality products so our customers can afford to get their hair done. A lot of people have told us over the years that my beauty shop is a very friendly, humble and un-conceited place to be; that they feel very comfortable and welcomed here. It feels like home to them and that makes me very proud to hear that. I know that hair business is a people business first."

"My Pa told me back when I first started running my beauty shop, 'always run it every day and dress everyday so you wouldn't be ashamed if your pastor walked in.'"

She says she continues to work on, keeping the business alive. "We all love our customers, and also the ones that have passed away," she noted. "They all have been so good to me over the years. I appreciate each and every one of you. My customers have been the reason why I have been able to make a living with something I truly love. I have had a lot of fun and happy times at my beauty shop with my customers. So many beautiful memories. May God bless each and every one of you, and thank you so much for your business over the last 50 years and the future years, because I plan on being here many more year's. And again we truly do appreciate each and every one of you."



Barbara's Beauty Shop owner Barbara Fish, is pictured with Doyleene Caplinger, center, and June Rhody.

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