



# **Owner Of Daryel's Hair Care Set To Retire After 50 Years As A Barber In Downtown Shop**

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EDWARDSVILLE - An era in Downtown Edwardsville is set to conclude at the end of the year, when Daryel Buesking, the long-time owner and proprietor of Daryel's Hair Care at 205 South Main Street, retires after 50 years as a barber and 47 years as the owner of the barber shop that bears his name.

Buesking will be turning over the business to his current partner, Blake Flener, but has nothing but great memories of his time as a barber.

"Well, I feel great," Buesking said during a recent interview. "I'm ready to pass the baton, you might say. There's a time in a man's life you've got to move on to the next phase of your life."

In his 50 years in the business, where he worked at many shops in the area before starting his own business in 1973, Buesking has seen many changes in the hair cutting industry.

"The hairstyles, the way we do business, going through all the trends," Buesking said. "The people have changed. In the old days, the customers were like family. As long as you made them happy, it was all good. Today, there's no loyalty, and younger people will go to where they can get their hair cut the fastest, just when you want it, instead of planning out your haircut."

When Buesking started out as a barber, customers would use their haircuts as a milestone at certain points in their lives, but it's something that's hardly seen anymore.

"It used to be when you gave a little boy his first haircut, his first communion, first-grade and graduation haircut," Buesking said. "In the earlier days, you got a customer, you made him happy, you had a customer for life. That's the way with the older generation, But the younger generation, they're more into what easier for them instead of a finished product, It's not a knock on the younger generation, it's more of a change in attitude of the younger generation."



Even today, both Buesking and Flener both adhere to the old-school ways of being a barber, giving quality haircuts that are both affordable and helping make their customers very happy.

"It's what we try to do," Buesking said, "giving a quality haircut at a reasonable price."

It's part of a tried-and-true plan when Buesking has built a loyal base since he opened the shop in 1973, and continues to do today.

"I would say that all of my customers are equal," Buesking said, "and I still have customers that started with me in 1973, and they're still with me."

Those long-time customers have become Buesking's favorites, and the relationships and friendships that he has with them are the most important part of his business.

"Those would have to be the ones that I have a special place in my heart for," Buesking said. "That is the most satisfying part, and that's the most difficult part. You don't get to build the relationships with the younger generation that you do with the older generation."

The biggest change that Buesking has seen in his business is the rise of the hair styling chains, such as Great Clips, Fantastic Sam's and Sport Clips, among others.

"What's changed our industry the most is the corporate chains that have come in," Buesking said. "Great Clips was the first to come into Edwardsville, and many more have come in since."

The chain shops have definitely hurt the old-fashioned neighborhood barber shops that once were a staple of communities around the area.

"It's hurt the small barber shops," Buesking said. "There used to be 28 shops, and 14 male barbers that were here in 1973. And today, to my knowledge, Blake and I are the two true barbers still in business. The chains have a combination of barbers and beauticians."

Both Buesking and Flener are still going strong, with Buesking helping to transition Flener into taking over the shop in early 2021, and Flener is very excited to keep the tradition of the barber shop going strong.

"It's exciting," Flener said. "It's really exciting. Right now, we're getting ready to change the name, and I'm working on a logo right now. It's going very well, I'm building my business, and I'm getting some of his gentlemen into my chair."

Flener feels that Buesking has been the best kind of teacher, helping him to learn the ins and outs of the business, along with some things that Buesking has learned over the years.

"It's fantastic," Flener said. "He's shown me a few things, and you don't learn everything in school. I'm under the impression that you continue to learn, and you never stop learning."

Despite the threat of COVID-19, the shop continues to thrive, and all the necessary adjustments have been made, while continuing to service the customers that enter into the shop.

"We've always kept a clean shop, and we always clean up after each person," Flener said. "But the mask issue makes it a little harder. The guys have to hold it to their face, and can't hook it around their ears. It's just one more thing we have to work around, and it's something we have to do."

Fortunately, no one's shown any symptoms or traits of the virus, but it's still safety first.

"It's not like it's a big thing, we just try to keep it cautious and careful," Flener said, "but we haven't shown any signs or symptoms, so so far, so good. And it's been nice and busy."

Flener is looking forward to becoming sole proprietor of the shop after the start of the year, and has enjoyed working with Buesking.

"It's been a joy to work with Daryel," Flener said, "and I look forward to keeping things going in 2021."

For Buesking's part, he's enjoyed all the relationships and friendships he's made over the years with his customers, and is ready to enjoy retirement with his wife.

"It's been a wonderful life," Buesking said. "I've always told people I've never gotten up to go to work, it's been spending time with friends and good people."