

Father-Daughter Team Treasures Common Bond

by Tara Cale

September 15 2020 9:38 AM



DECATUR - Bennie Strumpher has had a passion for coins since a young age.

“I became interested in them when I was about 10 years old,” he said. “My dad worked at a coal mine and he came home with a sock full of coins - they paid him in silver dollars. So he laid the coins out on the table. They were pretty, and I fell in love with them.”

From sorting through silver dollars in a bank vault as a child, to traveling along the trade show circuit with his family as an adult, Strumpher’s love affair with coins helped guide his life.

In 2007, he found a place for that love to take root when he bought Decatur Coin and Jewelry, a business that has been located at 104 N. Main Street in downtown Decatur since 1972.

But Bennie Strumpher isn’t the only Strumpher with an affinity for coins. His daughter, Samantha, happily followed in his footsteps.

“I went to a lot of coin shows with my dad,” she said. “I’d take coins around to dealers and sell them for him. I’d leave with a box full of coins and I’d come back with a hand full of checks or cash.”

“She was really little, probably 10 or 12 then,” Bennie added.

And she’s been by her father’s side at Decatur Coin and Jewelry since the very beginning, mostly handling the vintage costume jewelry that customers bring in.

“I love being with my dad and experiencing with him daily the passion he has for this place, and that’s helped me create as well,” she said.

Handling everything from coins, pocket watches and vintage paper money, to costume, gold and silver jewelry, Bennie and Samantha believe it’s their ethics and service that makes their business stand out from others.

“We are a ‘pay-it-forward’ organization,” Bennie said. “If you have something worth a lot of money, we are going to offer you a lot of money, about 90 percent on the dollar. We have paid out over 17 million dollars to people just like you over the past few years.”

“We are professional numismatists and travel the coin show circuit buying investor grade coins that we seldom encounter here at the shop,” he added. “We ‘know’ where the value is and many of our long term clients have become wealthy by paying for our experienced eyes. High eye appeal coins we sold just a few years ago for a couple of hundred dollars are worth thousands of dollars today.”

Bennie and Samantha are staying busy, enjoying their customers, and enjoying their work.

“I don’t have to work. I do this because I enjoy it,” Bennie said. “I could have retired a long time ago, but I’ve been doing this for 40 years and I hope to keep doing it as long as my eyes and health are good.”

"I love what I do," Samantha agreed.

“I love all the jewelry, and the coins too.”

Decatur Coin and Jewelry is located at 104 N. Main Street in Decatur. Store hours are 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. daily, except on Thursdays when they remain open until 7 p.m. They are closed on the weekend, for all major holidays and from 1-1:30 p.m. for lunch. You can find out more by calling 217-899-4346 or 217-423-0041, by visiting www.DecaturCoinandJewelry.com or find them on Facebook.