



# **Goes Out On Top: Maneke Jewelers Plans Closure On December 31, After 75 years In Business**

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ALTON - For 75 years, Maneke Jewelers has been a rock of a business in Alton. Owner Charlie Maneke has announced that he has decided to liquidate the inventory of the business and close as of December 31, 2021.

“I have been thinking about it, and I thought 75 years has a nice ring to it,” Charlie said.

Charlie in his early 60s, laughed and said: “I didn’t want to wait around until the 100th anniversary.”

Charlie purchased the store from his dad, Irvin, in 1983, and it was a memorable experience for him.

“When dad wanted to sell me the business, we went to the attorney to write it up and the attorney said you have to put something down. I said I don’t have any money. He asked if I had \$1,000 and I said yes and he said OK, a \$1,000 down. Then I had to pay my dad back with payments, which took 11 years.”

When Irvin died in 2006, Charlie said his dad was really proud of how he had grown the business. Charlie said much of his success is because of his father.

“I had a wonderful father,” he said. “We always got along. You see a lot of volatility with family members, but I never had that with my dad.”

For his time in the business, Charlie said he has loved his customers and their relationships with one another.

“My customers have been so loyal,” he added. “I am now into the third generation of servicing some of the people. I have been fortunate to be in the same place all these years and be in Upper Alton.”

A good, successful business gleans that success through the performance of its workers. Charlie said he couldn’t say enough about his employees. The business has had multiple long-term employees, one a jeweler there for 33 years and several others with many years of service.

“I have had really good and honest employees,” he said. “It is very difficult; I am putting them out of a job. That is the hard part of closing.”

Charlie said for the past 10 days he has been “pretty emotional” about the upcoming sale and closing.

“I think I can now make the claim I am the oldest business in Upper Alton,” he said. “I always say to people just an average guy can own his own business and be successful and that is a wonderful thing. We live in a great country.”

Maneke’s final sale will have items marked down from the most recent prices. He said he did not raise prices prior to marking things down for the sale, so everything will be truly priced lower, unlike other sales.

When asked about what he would tell other entrepreneurs attempting to build a business for the long term, he said: “Follow your dream. It is a lot of hard work, but you can do it.”

Charlie’s most profound words of the interview were simple but so strong: “I get to go out on top.”