

Charlie Maneke Ends 75 Years The Family Jewelry Business New Year's Eve With Love Of Alton

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
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ALTON - Charlie Maneke has been at the heart of Upper Alton for many years and on Friday, New Year's Eve, with what he describes as "mixed emotions," he closed the doors to his jewelry business for the final time.

"I put my heart and soul into it all these years," he said. "I am now ready to move into a new chapter of my life. I am kind of sad about it; this is all I have done my entire life."

In recent times, Charlie said he had occasions where he was sad and other situations happy, but overall, he said he is ready to begin his next chapter.

Maneke Jewelers finished 2021 with 75 years in business in Alton.

Charlie purchased the store from his father, Irvin, in 1983. His dad died in 2006.

"When dad wanted to sell 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 for the business, which took 11 years."

Charlie said he was glad he was able to continue the business for so many years that his father started in 1946 in Alton.

"We didn't get to travel very much because of the business," he said. "I am going to try to do that now. I would like to go somewhere next month, but with COVID I don't want to be in an airport. I will travel at some point."

Charlie explained there is something about being a small business owner that gives a person "a lot of pride."

"I had some good, loyal customers," he said. "I sold to the parents, the kids, and now the grandkids. That is really fun when that happens."

"What I love most about this business is it is a happy business. You get to be included in Christmas gifts, Valentine's Day, Mother's Day, anniversaries, and engagements."

Charlie closed by saying: "Alton is a special place. The people here have been very good to me." As Charlie Maneke closed his doors in Upper Alton for the final time on Friday, it is certain Alton area residents felt the same way about him.