

Sinclair Food Mart marks 75th year in Jerseyville

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
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Stan Sinclair and Sinclair Food Mart are institutions in Jerseyville.

Sinclair marks his 76th birthday today and the store recently on July 4 marked its 75th anniversary of being open in Jerseyville.

Stan's father, Norman Spencer Sinclair, started the store on July 4, 1940. Stan's mother also worked alongside Norman in the store. Norman Sinclair came from a family of farmers and had asthma.

"His dad lived on a farm and they were farmers and he had a hard time with the dust and everything. Eventually, my dad moved to town."

Stan worked out on the family farm during his childhood, but he joined his mom and dad with the grocery business at age 10 in 1949.

"I collected soda bottles, burned trash, carried out groceries and did just mediocre tasks," Stan said of his beginning.

Stan was a football player for Jerseyville and part of teams that lost only four games in the four years he played. Carl Crawford, now a Jerseyville funeral home director, and Bill Watts, were stars of that team. Both Crawford and Watts played college football; Crawford was a star at the University of Missouri. Crawford eventually played Canadian League football. Watts played in Miami during college, then eventually with the Houston Oilers. Stan was the blocking back for both of them.

Stan helped establish the Panther Athletic Club and was a president of the organization. The Panther Athletic Club donates considerable funds to Jersey sports teams for a variety of things today. He was also in the Marine Reserves for eight years.

At one time, Sinclair had an East and West store. When Stan returned home from the Marine Reserves in 1962 he started working at the East store. In 1965, the Sinclair family built the West store and eventually the East store was closed and everything consolidated to its present location on Aug. 7, 1991.

"We needed to expand the size of the store to hold more merchandise to keep up and the building was too small," he said.

Stan's wife, Shirley, still works in the Sinclair business. He started slowing down in 2008 and works about 30 hours a week, much like what his mother and father did at the end of their tenure with the store.

Sinclair has always been strong in meat and produce areas.

"Dad was a meat cutter and pretty much a perfectionist," Stan said. "He always had good meat and we still sell good meat. We also have always had pretty strong produce.

In 1975, we started the bakery at the West store. We make cakes, icings, and more, and it is all made fresh every day.”

Excellent customer service is what Stan Sinclair said he believes has made the store so successful.

“We strive to have good customer service and have all through the years,” he said. “We know what our customers like and dislike and really appreciate our families for their likes and dislikes. I have always been fortunate to have good employees.”

David Wittman and Scott Metzler presently manage the store.

“We have really tried to be a good spirit of Jerseyville and the community and give back what they have given us,” he said. “We have put in two streets by our store and our own water and sewer. I think with the quality of what we do and our customer service it will keep us in business for many years to come.”