

'Birthdays don't mean nothing:' 100-year-old barber servicing Graham

Audrey Horwitz
Reporter

Living to 100 years old is a feat in itself. Working six days a week at that age is even more remarkable.

But for Kenneth Wood, it's routine.

Wood has owned the Graham Barber Shop on Main Street in Graham since 1953. If you walk into the shop, you are greeted by the blue-eyed man dressed in khaki pants and a fresh white shirt, holding a pair of clippers. Four work chairs are secured to a checkered linoleum floor. The chair closest to the window is where Wood spends his days. The rest of the chairs are covered in books, boxes and dust. It's certainly not a flashy establishment, but it makes you feel right at home.

"I run the barber shop," Wood said. "The barber shop doesn't run me."

He works from 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Monday through Friday and from 9 a.m.-4 p.m. on Saturdays. It takes him about 20 minutes to give a haircut, but his customers don't mind the wait.

Customers have been loyal to Wood for years.

"My birthday is the same as his, only he's 25 years older than I am," one customer said while waiting his turn.

As he gets up to get a haircut, his knee makes a popping sound. "Hear that?" he said. "That's old age."

Another customer walks in and he and Wood started to talk about fruitcake.

"I used to make fruitcake," Wood said. "My wife walked in and said 'You're gonna ruin that thing.' I said, 'Well if I do, I'll make another one for you and I'll eat this one.' But when she tried it, she said it was the best thing she ever tasted."

After the haircut was done, the customer handed Wood the money and a tip.

"That's for you," he said. "And the tip's for your bride."

Wood was married to Pearl, his first wife, for 64 years. He married his current wife, Alice, in 1998. Alice is 18 years his junior.

Wood was born Aug. 30, 1911 in



JULIA SAYERS | Staff Photographer

100-year-old Kenneth Wood has been cutting hair in his Graham barbershop six days a week for the past 75 years.

Thomasville.

"I don't even have a high school education," he said.

Being the oldest of six children, his family needed his help. Wood's father, Wallace Spencer Wood, opened the barber shop and Wood joined the business when he was 25 years old.

"Next thing I knew, I was cutting and shaving folks, too," he said.

While working for his father, Wood was drafted into the military. He took his talents as a barber overseas, serving as the battalion barber during World War II. His service ended in 1946 and Wood resumed his work in Graham, where he has remained ever since.

When Wood talks to his customers, he stops cutting their hair and looks at

the person. He then puts his hand on the customer's shoulder to let him know he's listening.

Jerry Wayne Toney, a customer of about 20 years, plopped down in the barber chair.

"It's pretty out there, ain't it?" he asked.

Toney asked about Wood's birthday a few months back.

"The mayor gave me two keys to the city: one when I was 90 and other when I turned 100," Wood said.

His age doesn't deter people from coming in to get a haircut.

"When he's gone, there won't be no more like him," Toney said.

Wood has no plans to retire.

"As long as I can cut hair like I want

it, I'll continue," Wood said. "In all these years, I've never told but two customers not to come back."

One of the customers just could not be satisfied.

"It didn't matter what I did, he wasn't happy," Wood said.

The second customer was a teacher who wanted Wood to trim his hair with scissors.

"I cut hair with clippers, not scissors," he said.

Wood may be five times older than the average Elon student, but he doesn't pay attention to his age. At 100 years old, Wood still drives his red Buick to work every day.

"Birthdays don't mean nothing," he said. "It's what kinda shape you're in."

Coffee shop attracts students, artists for 'dynamic' nightlife

Justine Vadini
Senior Reporter

Sandwiched between the many pubs and quirky antique shops of downtown Greensboro, it's hard to miss The Green Bean Coffeehouse. The old brick building, true to its name, is painted an eye-catching green with large front windows. It peers into this diverse hub for students, artists, musicians and the loyal customers who have made the shop their everyday spot for a cup o' joe.

But The Green Bean tries to fit the green theme as much as possible. Inside, customers are welcomed by warmly lit olive-green walls. In the newly popular "go green" sense of the word, the coffeehouse abides by only fair trade coffee, with 90 percent being all-organic roasts. All of the pastries served are from Greensboro's local bakeries.

The inside of the house is full of character and inspiration.

"One of the things we pride ourselves on is our diverse clientele base, the wide variety of artists and old and young professionals that make Greensboro 'Greensboro,'" said Zeke Vantrees, the store's manager of three years.

Local artists' paintings cover the walls. Funky-patterned whitewashed metal panels make up the high ceilings while aged, caramel-colored hardwood stretches across the deep space all the way back to a quaint back porch area where customers can sit beneath hanging flowers.

The Green Bean is also a popular, low-key music venue. The back of the house is home to a small stage, where many local and up-and-coming artists play gigs. Instead of charging for admission, the house fosters up-and-coming musicians by charging a \$3-5 fee that goes completely to the artists and bands that play there.

The Green Bean has helped several

up-and-coming artists get their start. Seven years ago, Green Bean founder Pete Schroth booked North Carolina natives and folk band, The Avett Brothers, to play a gig at the coffeehouse. Schroth is now the tour manager for the band, who recently performed alongside Bob Dylan and Mumford and Sons at the 2011 Grammy Awards.

The coffeehouse is a spot for nightlife, staying open until 11 p.m. on the weekends and serving wine and beer on tap, along with 25 bottled beers and microbrews.

"We are a super dynamic place and we represent a lot of different things, from morning coffee to a place to party to a quiet place to study," Vantrees said.

For the regular customers that the house "thrives on," the spot is also a place to start the day inspired, stay awake, and, as the large sign above the door reads, "Have a good one!"



MOLLY CAREY | Staff Photographer

The Green Bean Coffeehouse in Greensboro offers fair-trade coffee and local music.

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