

John Godfrey retired! **After Over 98 Years, Godfrey Jewelers Closed Its Doors!**



John K. Godfrey, III

1911 was a booming year in Battle Creek, Michigan as the infant cereal industry lead by C.W. Post and W. K. Kellogg expanded their market. That same year John K. Godfrey II and Howard Sager opened their jewelry store, Sager and Godfrey Jewelers, in downtown Battle Creek. Borrowing \$1,000 from his father, a farmer near Parma, Michigan, John rode the Michigan Central Railroad to Chicago and purchased three suitcases full of jewelry. The loan was for one year, but John paid his father back within six months. This new store was located at 54 South Main Street.

In 1916, John bought out his partner, moved to the south side of Michigan Avenue and founded the John K. Godfrey Jeweler Co. This store was located next door to the well known Garden Theater. Business prospered until the late 1920's and early 30's. Due to the Great Depression, John was forced to look for a smaller store as business had receded. He moved back across Michigan Avenue to 18-1/2. The store survived the depression thanks in part to contracting with the New York Central and Grand Trunk Railroads for watch repair and certification. As the country came out of the Great Depression, Godfrey's expanded their inventory into fine silver flatware and hollowware, in addition to fine jewelry.

Following World War II, John was joined by his son, John (Jack) R. Godfrey, a mechanical engineer

graduate from Michigan State College, who had worked at Post Cereal before the war. Jack, always interested in physical science, studied at the Gemological Institute of America and became Battle Creek's first gemologist. In 1952, Godfrey Jewelers was nominated and joined the American Gem Society.

In 1965 Jack purchased his first downtown building and moved the store to 14 W. Michigan Avenue. The business continued to expand and in 1971 Jack was joined by this son, John K. Godfrey III, following several years of service as an officer in the United States Army. John, a MSU graduate brought his organizational skills to the business as well as another gemological degree from the GIA. During that same time, Godfrey's expanded into 16 W. Michigan Avenue with a complete gift and bridalware department. This expansion made Godfrey's one of the largest fine jewelry, tabletop and bridalware stores in the Midwest.

In March of 1984, Godfrey Jewelers opened a beautiful store in Lakeview Square Mall. This store, wrapped in Italian marble, featured Godfrey's fine jewelry and unique gifts. By 1990 it was apparent the mall adventure wasn't working and Godfrey's closed the store in June of that year.

Following the reopening of Michigan Avenue in downtown

Battle Creek in November of 1992, Godfrey's moved to their sixth and final location along Michigan Avenue in March of 1993. From this store Godfrey's continued to serve the families of Battle Creek and West Michigan.

The success over these past 98 years has been a combination of three generations of family dedication, dozens of skilled and caring employees and thousands of wonderful clients. It has been our pleasure to guide you in your fine jewelry selections, share the excitement of special gift giving occasions, and provide professional skills such as watch and clock repair, fine jewelry repair, custom hand engraving, gemological appraisals, baby shoe bronzing, and dozens of other services.

After months of contemplation Mr. Godfrey called Wilkerson and Associates – the nation's leader in conducting transition events for retail jewelers. Wilkerson evaluated their situation and developed a plan for a comprehensive Going Out of Business Sale. The event was an enormous success – the Godfreys exceeded the projected goal the Wilkerson team had given them. After over 98 years, the Godfrey's legacy had come to a graceful end.

SPECIAL ADVERTISEMENT