

NEIGHBORHOOD SPOTLIGHT:

Bob Fisher

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hen you sit down with Wayzata resident Bob Fisher's favorite spots, Caribou Coffee on Lake Street, you're in for a candid, honest conversation. He's down to earth and not likely to toot his own (shoe) horn.

Although it has been years since he owned it, the shoe repair shop in Colonial Square still bears his name – Bob's Shoe Repair.

Countless Wayzata residents have had their soles saved at the repair store over the years.

Although he's lived in Wayzata for decades, Fisher is not originally from these parts.

He's originally from Anoka and lived in both St. Michael and Montrose growing up.

STICK-TO-ITIVENESS

He'll never forget a lesson he carried all his life learned in an elementary school classroom.

One day, his teacher, also a nun, began writing a five-syllable word on the chalk board.

The word was stick-to-itiveness. Yes, it's actually a real word and it means dogged perseverance or tenacity.

"She said that was the most important word you'll ever learn," said Fisher.

"When you're working on something, don't give up, never, ever quit. Stay with it."

NAVY SERVICE

After graduating high school, Fisher was flip-flopping about what he wanted to do.

He tried to learn carpentry.

He then enlisted in the U.S. Navy.

"One of the best things that ever happened to me," said Fisher.

Fisher learned many life lessons while serving.

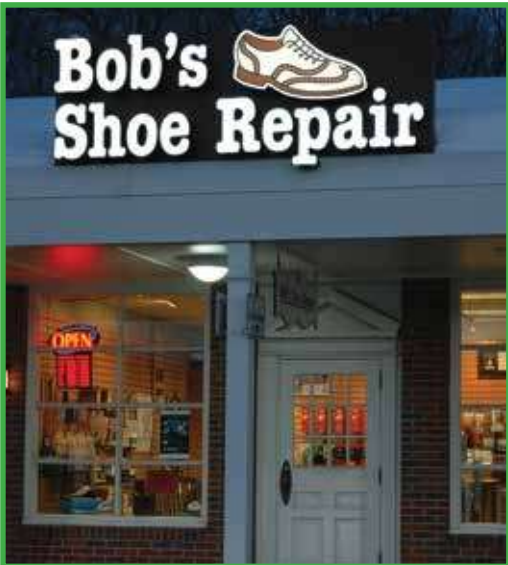
He was based in southern California and while off duty, he got a severe sunburn on his legs.

When he returned to his ship, he asked if he could do his job standing because of the sunburn.

Instead of making an accommodation for Fisher, he was threatened with a court martial for damaging Navy property.

"That's when I learned I was no more important to the United States Navy than a can of paint, or a screw, or a bolt," said Fisher. "If I was going to survive, it was totally up to me."

In November of 1970, Fisher got out of the Navy.



Pictures from top to bottom:
Talking about Wayzata with Editor Nate Leding
Shoe store at Colonial Square
Bob at his shoe repair shop in 2011

FINDING HIS FOOTING

Not too long after that, he got into the shoe business.

His first job at a shoe store in Anoka paid \$0.25 per hour plus room and board. Despite being on a shoestring budget, he managed to pay his car insurance and go on an occasional date.

Later on, he would drive to different towns, pick up shoes, repair them, and deliver them back to the customers.

Fisher developed a relationship with the folks at the Foursome clothing store in Wayzata and fate would bring him to Wayzata fulltime where he found his footing and established roots.

From 1972 until 1980, Fisher managed the Foursome shoe repair which was in the old Bay Center shopping mall.

In May of 1980, Fisher bought the shoe repair from the Engels.

28 years later, the Bay Center was set to be demolished. Getting booted from that spot had a silver lining. Fisher found the perfect spot just up the hill at Colonial Square.

Five years later, Fisher sold his business and retired.

BEST PLACE ON EARTH

Fisher has been involved in the Wayzata community for nearly 50 years.

He finds Wayzata as warm as welcoming as when he first came to town.

"They'd come into the shoe repair shop and treated me like a million bucks," said Fisher.

He encourages anyone who is not familiar with Wayzata to come visit and see how special it really is.

"Come get to know the place. Walk around. Say 'hi' to people. Walk in the stores, get to know the managers. Get to know the people in the community. It's just the best place in the world."

He admits things have changed in Wayzata over the years: new buildings, a different landscape, new neighbors. But he rejects the idea that the town is totally different.

"The heart and soul of Wayzata has not changed a bit," said Fisher. "It's the same loving, kind, wonderful place. It's still sacred, it hasn't changed. We build all this stuff, we do all this stuff, but it is still holy ground."

