

Meet Fenner McCoy: Leavey 4's artistic and therapeutic barber

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In the otherwise vacant halls of Leavey 4 Apartments, the buzzing of an electric razor functions as a welcome juxtaposition. A barber chair sits against the corner of the hallway while Fenner McCoy, a sophomore psychology major, aka Poleon Blendz, comfortably works his way around his client's hair.

"I'll kind of pick it out a little bit with this comb, just slightly, then go with the grain, so [it's] going down," he explained while turning on the razor again. "And that just makes it all a smooth canvas."

McCoy is a native of Berkeley, California, a city known for its rich self-expressionist diversity, with a culture encouraging the arts. He began his barbering journey the summer after high school to earn money before college.

"I was already kind of upset with barbers in general. [They kept messing] up my hair, my friend's hair. It just seemed like a good idea to learn," he explained. "I'm a creative person; this is similar to drawing. Because you kind of get in a flow state — just focused."

Through YouTube videos and a great deal of practice, McCoy taught himself the art of cutting all hair textures and is now proud to serve community members of various backgrounds.

"I started out by just literally asking people on my Instagram story, 'Is anyone willing to get messed up?'" he recounted. "I guess, surprisingly, some people were because I got some test subjects."

At LMU, his business quickly grew through word of mouth and Instagram promotion. As a result, the inception of the current Poleon Blendz name was born during his first year on campus.

"This guy was like, 'Yo, you look like Napoleon Dynamite but way cooler.' I was like, 'Thanks. I'll take it,'" he explained when describing the inspiration behind his business title. "I didn't want to [use] my own name. I wanted to separate them — And then [it] just kind of stuck."

He wears a "Vote for Pedro" T-shirt as an homage to the brand, continuing to maneuver through his client's braids with a comb in hand.

Today, most of his clientele consists of international and out-of-state students who, due to the distance and price of most Los Angeles barbers, opt for a trustworthy and friendly option closer to their doorsteps.

"I got a whole friend group of freshmen from New York. And then I got this guy from Bolivia, this guy from Australia," he said. "It's just really a community. I get to meet a whole lot of people I never would meet doing it. They know me as 'that barber guy.'"

Watching him at work resembles a therapy session; his passion for psychology is highlighted through his involvement in barbering. He moves slowly but confidently, his demeanor is the essence of chill.

Thanks to McCoy and his openness, a Leavey 4 haircut isn't just a physical act, but an opportunity for male students to be heard as well.

"Most guys don't get a chance to sit and talk; I like to listen, maybe ask some questions, just say something about what I've been feeling," he described. "It all goes together, and I think it's setting me up pretty well for whatever I'm doing [in the future.]"

McCoy is a meaningful reminder of the talent and heart roaming on campus; his business-like but artistically driven mentality is inspiring. As a barber, he serves as a listening ear and mentor to those to whom he provides his services. Still, as an LMU student, his collective approach and good nature are a wonderful addition not only to the halls of Leavey 4 but to every corner of the Bluff as well.