

# Long-time Davidson barber reflects

## While cutting hair, Raeford chats with the Davidsonian

Mary Lee of the Davidsonian recently spoke with James Raeford of Raeford's Barber Shop on Main Street. In between haircuts on a busy Thursday afternoon, Raeford reflected on his life and the changes he has seen in Davidson over the past 40 years.

# Q & A

BARBER JAMES RAEFORD



**The Davidsonian:** When did you first start cutting hair?

**James Raeford:** I started cutting hair when I moved to Davidson from Fayetteville, N.C., in October of 1957. I worked as a barber for Rab Johnson on Main Street for 16 years. Then I sold cars in Charlotte for six years. When the economy was bad during the gas crisis of the 70s, I switched back to cutting hair and worked for Potts Barber Shop in Cornelius.

**D:** Why did you open your own shop on Main Street?

**R:** When Ken Norton's Main Street barber shop closed upon his retirement, I decided to open my shop. I thought it was a good idea, and it has been very successful. I now have three part-time employees working for me.

**D:** What changes have you seen in Davidson since you moved here?

**R:** In 1957, Davidson was a little ghost town. That was before Lake Norman and the interstate came. The only industries in town were an asbestos company and the Bridgeport Fabric Company. And, of course, the College. Most people went to Charlotte for jobs or were employed by the College. The steady population growth of the Davidson area has been a good thing for business.

**D:** How have Davidson hairstyles changed over the years?

**R:** In the late 60s and early 70s, long hair was the fad. Then ROTC, which was mandatory for all students, made short hair popular. We got a lot of students then. There were 12 barbers working on Main Street: five at Norton's and seven at Johnson's. Now, ROTC is much smaller. But we still get Davidson students. Most get their hair cut short. I appreciate the Davidson students. They make success possible.

**D:** How have prices changed over the years?

**R:** When I first started cutting hair, a cut cost 75 cents. Today I charge nine dollars. Every three or four years, the price usually increases.

**D:** Have you liked living in a small college town?

**R:** I have. I like getting to know people, and I like people knowing me. I like having regular customers and not having to advertise much. In larger cities like Charlotte, you are just a number. When I go to restaurants around here, though, people always say, "Hello, Mr. Raeford." I also like the college atmosphere of Davidson. I'm glad the College kept the growth of Davidson to a minimum. Growth may bring revenue, but it also brings congestion.

**D:** What have been the most important things in your life?

**R:** I remember when the town of Davidson set up a housing program to help people purchase houses. That was 30 years ago. I was able to buy a house, and it meant a lot to me. The Davidson school system has been very good for my two sons. My older son played football at Northern Michigan University and is now working in Minnesota. My younger son just finished high school. I attribute much of my success to having a good wife and helper, Daisy. I married her, a beautiful Davidson girl, 38 years ago.

**D:** What advice do you have for younger people today?

**R:** My only advice is to take what you have been given and do your best with it. Also, you've got to have a trade. There is no job security anymore. I must stress going into business for yourself.

**D:** Is the rumor true that you are retiring?

**R:** Actually, I am already semi-retired.

**D:** What does the future bring for Raeford's Barber Shop?

**R:** Next January, my younger son is going to start working as a full-time barber in my shop.

The legacy must go on.



◆ Raeford gives Rowan Driscoll his signature cut.

Photos by Anna Judy

## In the Archives...

### Warner Hall, Amnesty International begin in early 80s

BY LAURA CRAVER  
Staff Writer

The year was 1982, and many of the cultural phenomenon we now associate with the 80s were in full swing. Advertisements in the Sept. 24, 1982, issue of The Davidsonian reflected the times, most notably in a full page ad for the famous shoe, the "Pony Stud."

While some things are best forgotten, September 1982 marked the beginning of two institutions that will long endure.

Warner Hall will celebrate its 15 year anniversary this month. Warner Hall "began operations" in September 1982 with 48 sophomore members, nine juniors, and four seniors. At the time, the board fee was \$390 and the social fee was \$50. Thus began a long Warner tradition at Davidson.

Also celebrating a 15th-year anniversary is the Davidson Chapter of Amnesty International. In 1982, a group of interested students combined their efforts to form the new Davidson chapter. The Davidsonian asked why there should be a chapter in Davidson.

"Here in college and in this country, we are in an atmosphere of freedom," said Elizabeth Kiss '83, a major organizer of the effort. "We need to recognize that there are people our age out there who, if they did what we do, would land in prison."

Amnesty's first project at Davidson was a petition drive against police brutality and civilian harassment in Uganda.

Still an active organization on campus, Amnesty International uses a grassroots approach to place public pressure on governments that oppress citizens and violate human rights. The organization's other major role is to educate and inform people about pertinent social issues.

Under the headline "College Costs Zoom," The Davidsonian reported a trend in education costs that had not ceased — and still hasn't. A survey conducted by the College Board found that private college and university students

would spend an average of \$7,475 to make it through an academic year, an 11 percent hike over 1981-82.

Tuition climbed an average of 20 percent at public colleges, and 13 percent at private colleges.

The mean tuition of a private college lingered around \$4,021, pocket change by today's tuition standards.

As for Davidson's cost of tuition, room and board "soared" to \$7,700, well over the national average but in accordance with Davidson tradition.

At the height of the ERA and its subsequent defeat, a timely editorial by a female student commented on what she considered to be Davidson's "sexist admissions policies."

In 1982, women accounted for roughly 34 percent of the Davidson student body. Now, women account for nearly 49 percent.

Describing her own successes and failures at achieving equal rights, she wrote, "Unless you are

willing to push for what you want, equal rights doesn't mean a thing."

Echoing what could be a similar argument in the affirmative action debate today, she said "Nothing gets handed to you on a silver platter...you have to get in there, work until it kills you...and only then will you achieve equality."

On a nonacademic note, Food Town — now known as Food Lion — spread to the Davidson area in 1982. Touted as the "fastest growing chain in America," Food Town added one more link in a burgeoning chain. The Davidsonian's account concluded with a list of prices for some essential items: A six-pack of Miller cost \$2.19; Miller Lite \$2.29, and Budweiser \$2.58. Five pounds of carrots was priced at 99 cents.

Davidson students may still long for the 80s, the years of their youth — and for really cheap carrots.

15 Years Ago  
This Week