

HEINLEIN GENEALOGY

Edward Carl "Sonny" Heinlein Sr (son, 1928 to 2014)
Doris Catherine Colvin Heinlein (wife, 1927 to 2018)

Store owner hangs up hat

July 26, 1989

Years ago, there was a huge hat bar and array of white gloves for sale at the Village Shop in Coraopolis.

Today, women rarely wear either symbol of a more gracious way of life. But more than fashion is changing these days at the Village Shop.

Doris Heinlein of Moon Township, Village Shop owner for 27 years, bowed out of the retail clothing business last week and paused in cleaning out her office to reflect on her career in local retailing.

In 1962, Mrs. Heinlein bought a gift shop on Fifth Avenue from her sister and brother-in-law, Peggy and Walter Gamble.

"I soon found out the town didn't need another gift shop and in two years did away with the gifts," Mrs. Heinlein says. Instead, she concentrated on clothing.

"At that time, in 1962, there were stores for half-sizes and older women, but not for younger women. The Adele Shop [on Fifth Avenue] had moderate-to-better clothing. I started with moderate-priced clothing for younger women.

"We were never high style, never the latest. I picked what I felt was my taste, more classic clothes.

"Pittsburgh was always two years behind the fashions of New York and Philadelphia. I waited for the mini-skirt to be established" before carrying it.

Her clientele, however, comprised women who did not necessarily demand the mini-skirt — women mostly in the 25 to 55 age group.

"I made mistakes. I was not experienced in retailing," she says. But she traveled to Florida, California and Dallas to find new lines not carried in department stores.

Another difference from department stores was service, Mrs. Heinlein says. The sales clerks could help accessorize an outfit and provided free gift wrapping, she says.

Her business grew. In 1972, she opened a second store on Beaver Grade Road in Moon Township. In 1977, she and her husband, Ed, a building contractor, bought a building on Mill Street in Coraopolis — a location that gave the store more room after Ed renovated it.

But sales declined at the Moon branch, and Mrs. Heinlein closed that shop in 1982. She still has not, she says, unlocked the secret of making a success of a dress store in Moon — pointing out others that have closed.

More than fashion and the Village Shop have changed. Mrs. Heinlein, a Coraopolis native, has seen her hometown change from one largely dependent on industry. With the change has come a change in clientele.

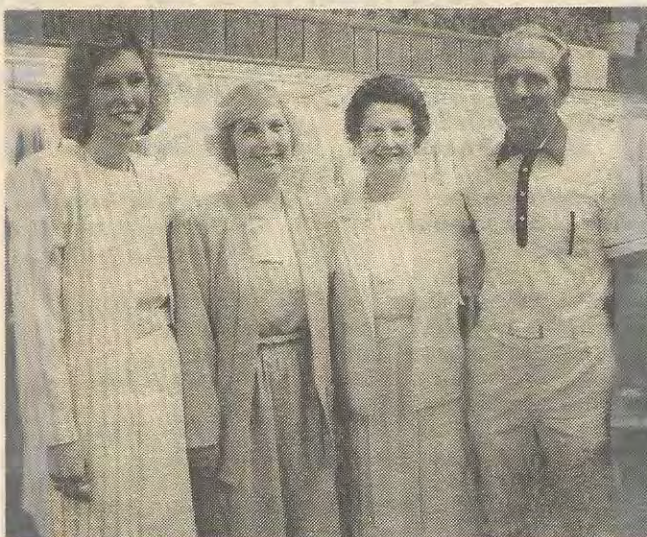
"The working girls used to come in at lunch hour. We used to have a lot more in Coraopolis and on Neville Island. But Fisher Scientific and so many companies have closed.

"That's what my nieces want to do: to bring a lot of new people in from Moon Township."

Lynn and Terry Kirkpatrick, Mrs. Heinlein's nieces, have bought the business.

The Kirkpatricks plan to make some changes in it to attract more customers, Mrs. Heinlein says. While many longtime Moon residents have shopped at the Coraopolis store, many recent arrivals have not established shopping habits that include Moon's neighbor, she says.

Mrs. Heinlein plans to help with buying for a couple of years, she says. But for now she plans to relax.

Village Shoppe Is Sold

The Village Shoppe, Mill St., Coraopolis will change hands August 1. Doris Heinlein is retiring July 31 after owning and operating the shop along with her husband, Edward, for the past 27 years. It has been on Mill St., Coraopolis, since 1977. Taking over will be Terry Kirkpatrick of Coraopolis, and Lynn Kirkpatrick of Neville Island. Terry attended the University of Maryland and Robert Morris College. Lynn is a graduate from Moon High. The staff will be retained and more lines of merchandise will be added. Shown here, left to right, are Lynn Kirkpatrick, Terry Kirkpatrick, Doris Heinlein and Edward Heinlein.