

## 100 Years of Barnes Furs

A century. Yes, Barnes Furs is turning 100 in 2027. It is hard to believe. In some ways it seems like such a long time. In other ways, not so long. Since I don't really talk about my age, all I'll say is I've been here for 42 years. When I think about what it must have been like to open the store in 1927 and how many changes there has been, wow. In 1927 Macon was a boomtown, with the Terminal Station opening just nine years before the store. It was one of the largest train terminals in the South, with a hundred arrivals and departures a day. The streets looked nothing like today, some brick and some still dirt. You would see horse-drawn carriages, men on horseback, and automobiles. Beluah Barnes had been working on furs for a while in Macon. She bought 807 Cherry Street, which had been a residence, and opened Barnes Fur Shop. The word "shop" was popular for specialty stores at the time. Then most everything in fur was custom. Customers would choose from sample patterns made of cloth and rings of pelts. Beluah would make the garment for the first fitting and finish it with a second fitting. The show room would have been small, like a formal living room, and the workroom she worked in three times the size. The number of furs she sold in a year was the smallest fraction of what we sell today. I think because modern life has big number associated with it billions, trillions it is easy to not think 100 years is a big number. But when considering the changes, it is a lot. I am sure the business for Beluah was amazing, and she was excited about the future of her new store. Then 1929's stock market crash began the Great Depression. She weathered that storm, and then

World War II. Through all of the successes and all of the challenges, Barnes Furs has been here the whole time. Barnes Furs is unique in that there are stores older than us, but we may be the oldest store still in its original location. The doors opened in 1927 on the corner of Cherry and New, and it has been open ever since. I think it says a lot about Macon and Barnes.



When I walk in downtown Macon today, seeing the new residences, the new restaurants, and the new stores, I smile and think about Beluah. The boomtown is coming back. Sure, we have issues, but with progress and change, there will always be issues. I

am excited to see Macon's future. Many of you might not know, my father, Shirley Griffin, passed away this past December. I didn't talk about him in this history, but there aren't enough pages. He did more for Barnes Furs than any of the other owners. I think he and Beluah are going to be proud of Macon and the store. Stop by the store and see how amazing the 100 year old place has become.

## The Come Back ...

As soon as I write about changing your full-length coat in to something different, things change and they start becoming popular again. Of course, that's what fashion does, it keeps changing. We have sold more and had more interest in full length minks than we have had in years. In fact, as of today we are sold



look that you like - and I have to say a full-length coat just looks so good. Since the late 1980's, it has been perfectly acceptable to wear them as casually as you want. A pair of fashionable jeans with a turtleneck sweater is a great look. Throw a full-length mink on with it, and that makes it look so much more wow. Just as important is weight. Back in the 1980's, it needed to be much colder to wear full-length coats because of the weight. With today's coats you can wear it in the same temperature as a jacket and still not get hot. So whatever temperature you start to get a chill, you can enjoy it. And like a customer commented on the other day, of course when the weather dips colder, the amazing warmth stops where the fur stops. With a full-length mink, my legs are as warm as the rest of me. Stop by and see us. Our inventory is still huge, and we can describe the new full-lengths in every detail.

out. Don't worry - we have more on the way. Of course, today's full-length is better than ever. The new sheared full-length mink coat is so lightweight, but the natural mink coat is also lightweight. I think the length decision now is more about style - the