

A rich Cambridge heritage will become a bright Cambridge future

To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under heaven.

—King Solomon

Sid Somer's Men's Wear has been a fixture on King Street in Preston for two generations, but in a few months it will be transformed for the next generation.

Mr. Sid Somer came to Canada from Poland in 1924 locating in Kitchener when the population was 19,000. He obtained employment at the Amos Holden Company, rubber footwear manufacturers which later became the B.F. Goodrich Co. Canada Ltd.

It was 1928, MacKenzie King was prime minister and W.D. Euler was first elected to the House of Commons, when Sid and his brother Irving founded the Red Front Department stores. The first outlet opened in Kitchener, and the second store opened in Preston under Sid Somer's management. Branches in Stratford, Guelph and Hamilton soon were opened and other family members became associated with the enterprise.

In 1934, Sid married Edith Himmel of Toronto and the couple had three sons, Arnold, Michael and Brian.

Red Front department stores successfully survived the depression through good management and public confidence. Sid's optimism grew as the war ended and in 1952

he took over of the Preston branch, changing the name to Sid Somer's Men's Wear.

When Sid retired from business in 1972, he was succeeded by son Michael. Shortly after Mike took the helm he initiated major alterations to the store while maintaining the core principles of quality, service and building customer relationships. This attitude contributed to the success the business enjoys today.

Mike tells the story about a fashion emergency. Faced with a dress code violation at a formal event at Langdon Hall, a customer needed help in a hurry! The team at Somer's pulled the customer's file, shortened a pair of dress pants and had them delivered within an hour.

It's that type of personal touch and concern for the needs of the customer that will not be lost when Mike retires on Jan. 31, 2009.

Trusted employee Paul Gadsby will reopen under the name Gadsby's in the same location in February 2009. As many men have already discovered, Gadsby is able to take the loathsome task of clothes shopping and turn it into an enjoyable experience.

When the store reopens it will have a specialty coffee bar at the back; one more way that Gadsby will "romance the customer" when they shop at 758 King Street, Preston.