



**By Carolyn Lee**

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When Richard Johnson obtained his barber training at a school in downtown Denver in 1960 it never entered his mind that he'd be cutting hair for 50 years.

He was recently presented with a certificate from the State Barbering Board acknowledging those 50 years. "I was pretty fortunate to do this for 50 years," he said of his reaction to the award.

After training in 1960, Johnson spent 16 months in Sterling, Colo. cutting hair.

That's when Louis Landreth of Imperial called him and asked if he'd be interested in purchasing Landreth's barber shop. It was located where a hotel had once stood, in the present Barbers Inn location.

Johnson agreed to purchase it in 1963 and called it Richard's Barber Shop. The name was later changed to Barbers Inn when former son-in-law Ty Vetter joined the shop.

Landreth worked a couple of months with Johnson until the apprentice received his master license from the Nebraska state board.

Johnson, 77, calls himself an "old-time barber." He just cuts mens' hair and uses a clipper.

Asked why he's been barbering for so long, Johnson replied "To make a living, I suppose." He also runs cattle when he's not working at the shop.

The Neligh native said he likes being with his customers. Earlier this week he traded comments with Ernie Heskett and Charley Colton, enjoying the quick conversation and the clients.

Things have changed over the years, of course. Johnson's customers pay \$14 for a haircut today. When he started in Imperial, a haircut cost \$1.25.

The biggest improvement, in his opinion, is the use of a vacuum to gather up loose hair.

Johnson works Tuesday and Thursday mornings now, leaving the rest of the days to Lori Sis, who cuts both men and women's hair.

Does he have plans to retire? "I'm going to have to, probably, whenever," he smiled.