

Goldsmith Silversmith

A Genuine Gem in the Old Market

By KellyAnn Hanzlik

Make a trip down to the Old Market to check out the glittering selection of jewelry at Goldsmith Silversmith. If, by chance, you don't find something that makes your eyes absolutely sparkle with delight, they can design something special just for you. "The main thing that we

do is custom," says Dwaine Ferguson, owner and designer. "Sometimes people don't know quite what they want, so we show them pictures and do some drawings for them." First opened in 1974, Goldsmith Silversmith has been in business for over 40 years. They know their business and customers well. One such customer, Stephanie, writes on Yelp that Goldsmith Silversmith is "my go-to place for one-of-a-kind pieces, basics, jewelry repair, and special orders." They do it all!

Dwaine, who is originally from Brewster, Nebraska, grew up driving a tractor on a ranch. It's a long drive from there to where he is now, designing custom jewelry for the people of Omaha, nationwide and international visitors, and even the rich and famous. The store's Facebook page notes a recent visit by the singer and actress Bernadette Peters, who enjoyed the store's resident mascot, a long-haired cat named Copper. Sean Penn, Dennis Hopper, and Dusty Hill of ZZ Top have also been to the store. Dwaine's personal favorite, he says, was a visit years ago from none other than Liberace himself. "I didn't really have anything big and flashy enough for him back then," Dwaine says with a smile, "but I think I would now."

Dwaine's road from architecture to custom jewelry design was a winding one. "Back in 1968," he recalls, "I was in San Francisco, in the Navy, and I saw people sitting on the sidewalk selling stuff. I thought I could make enough money doing that to buy the Jaguar that I wanted. I was an architectural draftsman. I came back to Omaha and bought a house. I built a workshop in it and started making metal pieces... flowers, decorations, and wall hangings and stuff. I dragged them around to shows. I decided that jewelry would be a whole lot easier to carry around."

He called up Wayne Selzer, a master jeweler and well-known teacher in adult education, to sign up for one of his classes, only to find that Wayne had been in an accident and needed an assistant. Dwaine took the job and started working with Wayne at UNO and at the Joslyn Art Museum.

Goldsmith Silversmith has been in the same location for more than 40 years. "The Silversmith was here in 1972," Dwaine explains, "and I was doing work

on the side and had a loft and workshop downtown. One day, the owners of the Silversmith said they were going to sell it. I made them an offer, and they took it. I picked a day in February and opened that day in 1974. That's the day it all started."

Does he have a favorite design piece? "Over the years, I've made hundreds," Dwaine laughs. "I don't know that I could pick out one piece!" He does have a particular style, though. "My style for many years has been angular. That probably comes from my architectural beginnings." His favorite material to work with is pearls. "I do a little of everything, but I have an addiction to pearls. I get them from all over. I go for what I find interesting, not necessarily what is popular. I like free-form, odd-shaped pearls that I make into stuff."

When asked what he wants people to know about the store, he turns serious. "I am not good at patting myself on the back," he says, "but when it comes to custom jewelry, I think we offer the best available anywhere. We have customers from all over the world. I

have a lady in Paris who keeps offering to have me come over so she can show me the city sights." Yelp reviewer Joanne S. from Chicago agrees. She writes: "This place is amazing! I've bought multiple pieces from them over the years." She adds that she travels internationally for work and that Goldsmith Silversmith has "some of the most interesting pieces I've seen anywhere."

For more information on this genuine gem in the Old Market, check out their website at www.goldsmithsilversmith.com or call them at 402-342-1737. You can also find them on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. Visit them in the Old Market at 1019 Howard Street. **WE**



l-r: Danielle Morgan, Dwaine Ferguson, Heather Kita, Jim Brummel, Elizabeth Brummel, and Terri Rummings

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