



# Metro Business

## *Biz Buzz: John Marshall Barber Shop headed home*

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*Hugh Campbell's move is part of the rebirth of the Hotel John Marshall, once one of Richmond's crown jewels. It is being renovated into 238 apartments and about 20,000 square feet of retail space.*

**W**hen Hugh Campbell packed up his belongings and moved to the other side of East Franklin Street in downtown Richmond, it was supposed to be for only a short time. Two years at the most, he was told.

That was five years ago.

Now Campbell, owner of the John Marshall Barber Shop, is preparing to move back to his old space.

"I am glad to be going home," said Campbell, who had moved his shop from the Hotel John Marshall into a small, heaterless former storage room that shares an entrance with a parking garage.

Campbell expects to move back into renovated space Dec. 1 at what is now the Residences at the John Marshall, a 16-story apartment building with retail at the ground level.

"You should see it over there. It's beautiful," he said.

The mirrors, countertops and chairs at the new shop have been refurnished from the original John Marshall Barber Shop, which opened Oct. 29, 1929, the day after Black Monday ushered in the Great Depression.

The new space is about twice the size of the current shop and seemingly a world away, Campbell said.

Right now, he and two barbers work in a space with peeling paint and overhead pipes that looks more like an office in a service station than a barber-shop. In the winter, he's had to bring in space heaters to keep warm.

While he's maintained much of his storied customer base — which includes governors, power brokers and a who's who of Richmond's business community as well as generations of regular folks looking for a trim — business is down 32 percent

from where it was six years ago before he moved, he said.

To fit into the temporary space, he had to cut back to three chairs — from eight — and quit offering some services.

Then there was the fear that new customers would not discover the shop.

"We have three or four generations coming here, but I was a little concerned about the next generation," he said.

Those worries are allayed now that the shop is going back home, he said.

Campbell's move is part of the rebirth of the Hotel John Marshall, once one of Richmond's crown jewels. It is being renovated into 238 apartments and about 20,000 square feet of retail space.

For Campbell, moving back to the shop is more than simply reopening a business, it's a homecoming.

He started working there in 1967 as an apprentice under Herman A. Hicks, who previously owned the shop. He'd planned on joining DuPont as a draftsman but fell in love with barbering.

"It's not work," he said last week as he joked with customers. Talking with people "is what I love. It's a great business."

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