

Danny Carr

A member of a hardworking family, Carr comes by his ambition and entrepreneurial spirit naturally.



By Lynn Crandall

When Danny Carr goes to work each weekday, he can be found championing justice in Birmingham, Alabama. As an assistant district attorney in Jefferson County, Carr leads a hectic life. Still, most days he can be found afterhours sitting down to share in conversation at D and J's Barber and Style Shop in Ensley. Located at 721 19th Street, the shop is a successful business Carr opened in memory of his brother, Jackstin Hunter, who was killed September 9, 2001, as a college freshman.

"Along with my duties as assistant D.A., opening a barber and beauty shop in Ensley was something I decided I wanted to do because my brother had always wanted to own a barber shop," Carr said. "He was someone who always took pride in the way his hair looked and the quality of his hair cut. That was my motivation, and to give back to the community."

Carr, 39, opened his shop in 2006 after renovating the space to meet his

needs. He decided to locate his new business in his childhood neighborhood because he felt it would be a good fit. Even though the neighborhood has suffered a dingy reputation in recent years because of high crime rates, Carr said he enjoyed growing up there, surrounded by family and friends who cared about one another. He retained a sense of belonging to the community and wanted to invest in it with a business that would not only offer jobs and services but provide a place for natural, positive interaction. "Growing up in the community I gained a certain affection for and appreciation for the area and the people I learned things from," Carr said. "I think that bringing a certain kind of business is important. The shop is absolutely a part of the community. I like the camaraderie of the people who come in and get their hair done and just sit around and talk about current issues."

Even when initiating groundwork for his business, Carr turned close to home, renovating the space his grandfather Daniel Carr Sr. donated to him

and seeking his advice, as well as tapping local residents for their plumbing, electrical and construction skills to help get the shop in shape.

"Instead of employing a large construction crew or company, I contracted guys from the neighborhood who were self employed, some people would say have some personal problems but who also had skills and talents," he said. "I'd known them all my life and they needed work. It took more time to do the work, but in the end it was a lot more fulfilling. I could contribute to the community and these guys could make money and feel a sense of ownership in the creation of something good in the neighborhood."

A member of a hardworking family, Carr comes by his ambition and entrepreneurial spirit naturally. Though the location of his shop could deter business, it is enjoying success. He credits advice from his family for some of that success.

"Honestly, I got my best advice from my mom and my grandfather," he said. "As a kid I watched my grand-

father, and he didn't have any fancy education but he believed in making money. The one thing he told me was when you start a business, make sure you understand the business you're starting. And appreciate the people who work for you. I've tried to treat each one with respect and I feel the business has grown because of that."

Carr also attributes his shop's success to his business philosophy of giving people quality service and acknowledging their role in keeping the business going. He advises those who want to pursue entrepreneurialism to understand the business they want to get into, employ quality workers and treat employees and clients with respect.

"I think being loyal and just being consistent in delivering quality service and offering high-quality products is fundamental," he said.

"It's also important to have the right people. I'm not a barber or beautician, but if you hire the right people and treat them right, the place will run itself. In my shop, they're a great group of people who all pull together for a common cause and they all do a great job."

At D and J's, three barbers and three beauticians provide services that include haircuts for children, men and women and hair permanents, coloring and styling, among other things. The service is top-notch, but the congenial atmosphere invites return visits as much as does the hair care, said James

Wright, assistant men's basketball coach at Alabama A & M University and Carr's life-long friend, as well as a regular customer of D and J's. He said he encouraged Carr to open the shop because of his hard-working, authentic nature.

"It's been a growing thing since he

25 years."

Carr's team approach and interest in exerting a positive impact on the community isn't limited to his shop's employees and customers. He looks at the shop's success as a means to offer free haircuts to area underprivileged children and free styling for less fortunate



opened the shop. It's a great environment where you can relax, discuss business, pleasure, ball games and just be yourself," Wright said. "Danny does things for the right cause. He's very ethical. He is the type of person who makes people want to come back. His trueness and trustworthiness make him a distinguished gentleman. My barber there takes care of me. I hope the shop is around for the next

teens when they prepare for prom. "These things mean a lot to people," Carr said. "I feel my shop has some of the best stylists and barbers. We don't take our customers for granted. That's why I think people should come here. And also, because at some point I'm going to put some of the money they spend here back into the community. I'm proud of the business. It's a good thing."