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Geiger's Clothing & Sports Named Ohio's Main Street Business of the Year

by Paula Reed

Downtown Lakewood is a LakewoodAlive initiative dedicated to the revitalization of Lakewood's primary commercial district using the National Trust for Historic Preservation's Main Street template. Lakewood is one of only 38 communities in Ohio selected to participate in this program, which is administered by Heritage Ohio.

When Heritage Ohio opened nominations for the annual Main Street awards, we knew right away we had to nominate Geiger's Clothing & Sports for Main Street Business of the Year. The criteria for judging include building preservation, revitalization and community involvement. When we submitted the nomination we couldn't imagine that any other business in Ohio could match in its community the contributions Geiger's makes to Lakewood, but we breathlessly awaited announcement of the winner. How exciting that Heritage Ohio agreed, and bestowed this honor on Geiger's.

Geiger's is a superb example of a highly-successful independent family-owned business. Brothers Chas and Gordon and their wives, Patti



Susan, Gordon, Patti and Chas Geiger and Paula Reed at the Heritage Ohio awards ceremony.

and Susan, represent the third generation of Geiger's to provide a delightful, personalized shopping experience. Geiger's was founded in 1932 in the very same block in which the store now operates.

One of the key components of the Main Street program is preservation. Chas and Gordon have shown their commitment to preservation by the careful restorations of both their properties (their store and the building occupied

by Melt,) for which they won Lakewood Heritage Advisory Board awards for preservation and commercial revitalization in 2002 and 2008.

The Geiger name is synonymous with community involvement. Both Chas and Gordon are active in many civic groups and boards; Chas dedicated 21 years of service to the Lakewood Board of Education. They sponsor a multitude of Lakewood events, and have been backers of Lakewood's

Main Street program from the beginning. Chas serves on the board of LakewoodAlive, and on the Downtown Lakewood Economic Restructuring committee. To paraphrase Gordon: "Community involvement is a family tradition. Our father and grandfather both believed in its importance, and we were brought up to value it too."

For 77 years, the name "Geiger's" has represented quality, style, class and community in Lakewood. They have anchored Downtown Lakewood despite suburban sprawl and big box stores. They have repeatedly adapted to changing demographics and customer expectations without abandoning their core values of quality and personal attention. Their reach is long—at the Heritage Ohio awards ceremony, a woman attending from Mansfield came up to introduce herself to Chas. Turns out that, following in his father's tradition, her husband drives to Lakewood to shop at Geiger's!

Hearty congratulations to Geiger's Clothing & Sports for being named Heritage Ohio's 2009 Main Street Business of the Year.