

Shining On

The Story of Zachary's Jewelers and Life One-Year after The Fire

By Molly Little

When Steve Samaras opened the doors to Zachary's Jewelers in 1992, he had no idea of the journey the store would take him on nor of the life lessons he would learn. Located in historic downtown Annapolis, Zachary's proudly offers the finest quality jewelry — fashion forward styles with lasting value.

Owner, Steve Samaras has been looking at jewelry for over 25 years and to say the least, he knows his precious metals and gems. Samaras was introduced to the jewelry world in the late 1970s, when his cousin and a friend approached him with a business venture to buy gold and silver. Things didn't exactly work out as planned, but Samaras was intrigued by the craft and decided to become a gemologist. He earned his degree in the early 1980s and went to work in a local jewelry shop. In 1992, he finally decided to step out on his own.

The opportunity to open Zachary's fell into his lap when the previous owners decided to sell the business. When choosing the name, he wanted a name that represented strength with a classic feel. He began at the back of the alphabet and thankfully didn't have to go too far.

As Samaras began thinking about his jewelry store, he wanted to use his background as an Annapolitan to create an appealing local business that invited customers to return



again and again. He focused on creating quality customer service, as well as becoming an active member of the community. Both of these characteristics were things he knew would help generate lasting customers — many of which turned into lifetime friendships. He would later find that both of these decisions were two of the best he ever made.

On November 25, 2005, around 8 p.m., Samaras got a call that would change his life forever. His business manager called asking him to quickly come to the store and when Samaras arrived, all he could do was stand across the street and watch his business burn. "The only way to describe the feeling was shock — not just on the professional level over the fire, but on the personal level as well, as my dad had passed the week before. It was just an overwhelming feeling," Samaras said.

At about midnight, Samaras gathered his staff and family in the backroom of Pepper's, across the street, and laid it all out for them. "I told them we had a year — insurance would cover everything for a year, all our salaries, everything — and we could take that year to rebuild. Or we could work to open in time for our Christmas party one week later," Samaras said. Harvey Blonder, Samaras' land-

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