



# Chestnut Hill Local

(/)

Wednesday, February 28, 2024

MAIN MENU



My account (/account/)

Log out (/login.html?action=logout)

Search



Call today for your estimate!!

215-572-6242

(https://chestnuthillbanners.creativecirclemedia.com/www/delivery/ck.php?

oaparams=2\_\_bannerid=572\_\_zoneid=3\_\_cb=b4be035e1a\_\_oadest=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.stahlelectric.com%2F)

## 'Sole-ful' business closes after 87 years



(https://beta.creativecirclecdn.com/chestnuthilllocal/original/20240228-001226-Carman%20outside.jpg)

**Carman's Shoe Repair, one of Chestnut Hill's oldest businesses, is closing.**

PHOTO BY CARLA ROBINSON

Posted Wednesday, February 28, 2024 12:00 am

by **Len Lear**

Thomas “Tim” Greenwood, a lifelong resident of Chestnut Hill, is sad these days because his favorite longtime Chestnut Hill business, Carman's Shoe Repair, is closing.

“I and many other Chestnut Hill folk have been patronizing Carman’s since his father ran the shop many decades ago,” Greenwood, a member of the Chestnut Hill Conservancy Board, told us last week. “When I was a kid and had to get my loafers re-soled, there was no shoe repair person in Chestnut Hill other than Carmen.”

Soon, Northwest Philadelphia will be without the shop founded 87 years ago by Carmen Notarianni Sr., and currently operated by his son Carmen Jr. He is closing the business because he was diagnosed with myasthenia gravis, a chronic autoimmune disorder marked by extreme muscular weakness.

“I was told my left arm would not be functional for 12 months,” Carmen Jr. said. “I used to do so much myself, and you just can't find any Tom, Dick or Harry to run this business. I just don't have the strength and energy to run it anymore.”

In recent years, Carmen Jr. has coped with pinched nerves in the neck, spine problems, numbness in his fingers and had a plate implanted in his neck. He also intermittently wears a neck brace.

Carmen Jr. technically closed the business at the end of last year, but he comes in on Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. to sell the remaining inventory. He has put the building up for sale with a listed price of \$800,000.

The Notarianni family moved to Chestnut Hill in 1966, having lived on Devon Street in Mt. Airy before that. Carmen Sr., who was born in Calabria, Italy, came to the U.S. in 1934 and started the shoe repair business three years later at 8113 Germantown Ave.

After starting the business, he served in World War II. In 1998, the shop moved next door to 8111 Germantown Ave. The family changed the name of the shop from Carmen’s to Carman’s many years ago because there was already a Carmen’s shoe repair shop in the area.



([https://chestnuthillbanners.creativecirclemedia.com/www/delivery/ck.php?oaparams=2\\_\\_bannerid=559\\_\\_zoneid=1\\_\\_cb=f6a3b8a9a5\\_\\_oadest=https%3A%2F%2Fjohnneillpainting.com%2F](https://chestnuthillbanners.creativecirclemedia.com/www/delivery/ck.php?oaparams=2__bannerid=559__zoneid=1__cb=f6a3b8a9a5__oadest=https%3A%2F%2Fjohnneillpainting.com%2F))



([https://chestnuthillbanners.creativecirclemedia.com/www/delivery/ck.php?oaparams=2\\_\\_bannerid=17\\_\\_zoneid=1\\_\\_cb=953536c5aa\\_\\_oadest=https%3A%2F%2Felfantwissahickon.com%2F](https://chestnuthillbanners.creativecirclemedia.com/www/delivery/ck.php?oaparams=2__bannerid=17__zoneid=1__cb=953536c5aa__oadest=https%3A%2F%2Felfantwissahickon.com%2F))

“Carmen [Jr.’s] dad was a tough old guy from the Chestnut Hill Italian community, but everyone knew him and went there for anything needing leather repair – shoes, pocketbooks, boots, loafers, from Brooks Brothers’ tassel shoes to work boots,” Greenwood said. “He knew everyone who came in the door by name, and all had fond stories of Carman’s as an old-school Chestnut Hill original.”

Carmen Jr. went to Holy Cross Elementary School in Mt. Airy and Cardinal Dougherty High School, graduating in 1976 and helping out in his dad's business after school. His uncle, Lou, who also worked in the business, was killed in a car accident in 1974, so Carmen Jr., who was a high school junior at the time, proceeded to spend much more time helping his dad in the store.

He chose to continue partnering in the business after high school while he attended Spring Garden College for four years, majoring in management and accounting and graduating in 1981.

“I had job offers for department store management,” Carmen said, “but they wanted me to move far from Philly, and I didn't want to leave Dad high and dry. I've been working here since 1975. I bought the building from Mom and Dad in 1982. Dad stopped working in 1999 and died in 2000, he had a constant heart problem. One day he fell, and we knew it was bad. He had to go into a nursing home. My mom, Rose, died in 2003.”

Carmen Jr. has four sisters, one of whom is his twin. “One thing I missed in life,” he said, “is not having any brothers, but I do have two sons and no daughters.”

Carmen's wife of 40 years, Patricia, is an administrative assistant for a small mortgage company. She is one of 11 children in an Irish-German family that grew up in a Fairmount rowhouse. Carmen's twin, Caroline, is a Roslyn resident and Catholic School teacher. His sister, Patricia, is a teacher who lives in Lafayette Hill. Another sister, Rose, owns a beauty salon in Cape May County, where she has lived for 40 years. His fourth sister, Tina, is a retired bookkeeper who lives in Wyndmoor.

"It's great that we all live not far from each other," said Carmen. "It helps us to stay in touch."

Not many people "are going into the shoe repair business anymore," Carmen Jr. said. "Many people don't even get shoes repaired anymore. They just throw them away. And so many men now wear running shoes, not dress shoes. But the Chestnut Hill community has been very good to us, and I have had some wonderful workers over the years. I'd really like to mention my last guy, Lorenzo Bazan, 72, who came here from Argentina. He is the greatest, been with me since 2008. Very reliable. I felt so bad that I had to let him go, but I had no choice."

For more information, email [carmansshoerepair@verizon.net](mailto:carmansshoerepair@verizon.net). Len Lear can be reached at [lenlear@chestnuthilllocal.com](mailto:lenlear@chestnuthilllocal.com).

OTHER ITEMS THAT MAY INTEREST YOU

**SEPTA GM: 'Certain regional rail lines will go ... (/stories/septa-gm-certain-regional-rail-lines-will-go-away,31294)**

**'Sole-ful' business closes after 87 years (/stories/sole-ful-business-closes,31296)**

**Vote on hold for Greylock proposal (/stories/vote-on-hold-for-greylock-proposal,31232)**

**On the rails: Our local trains (/stories/on-the-rails-our-local-trains,31233)**



([https://chestnuthillbanners.creativecirclemedia.com/www/delivery/ck.php?](https://chestnuthillbanners.creativecirclemedia.com/www/delivery/ck.php?oaparams=2_&bannerid=630_&zoneid=1_&ch=4b5d8752bf_&oadest=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.msjad.org%2Fadmission%2Fsummer-at-the-mount)

Donate to CHCA Annual Appeal ([https://www.paypal.com/donate/?hosted\\_button\\_id=HNBT34YY8VANC&source=psd&source\\_code=0&source\\_context=donor](https://www.paypal.com/donate/?hosted_button_id=HNBT34YY8VANC&source=psd&source_code=0&source_context=donor))

LOCAL CALENDAR

<p>Sun, Mar 03 @3:00pm Sponsored  <b>Philadelphia Youth Orchestra</b>          Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts          Wed, Feb 28 @8:00pm</p>	<p>Sun, Mar 03 @8:00pm Sponsored  <b>Cold War Kids - 20 Years Tour</b>          The Fillmore</p>	<p>Wed, Feb 28 @1:00pm  <b>Daily Mass</b>          College Hall De La          (</p>
---	--	--



**OPEN MIC!**

Wed, Feb 28 @8:30am

**Dare to Lead | Leadership Intensive | February 2024**

MEA - Midatlantic Employers Association

Wed, Feb 28 @7:30pm

**Temple Theaters: Pippin**

Philadelphia, PA

See All Events  
(<https://chestnuthilllocal.com/events/>)

Add Your Event ([https://hub.cityspark.com/event/submission/ChestnutHill?utm\\_medium=internal&utm\\_source=widget&utm\\_campaign=add-ev](https://hub.cityspark.com/event/submission/ChestnutHill?utm_medium=internal&utm_source=widget&utm_campaign=add-ev))

**THE LATEST**



**Third-seeded GA reaches the PAIS tournament semifinals (/stories/third-seeded-ga-reaches-the-pais-tournament-semifinals,31299)**

UPDATE: In the PAIS semifinals, both Inter-Ac teams fell to Friends Schools League opponents. Friends Central edged GA, 54-49, and Westtown dispatched Notre Dame, 66-41.

(</stories/third-seeded-ga-reaches-the-pais-tournament-semifinals,31299>)



**A golden anniversary for NFA Snowball Tournament (/stories/a-golden-anniversary-for-nfa-snowball-tournament,31298)**

The longest-running scholastic basketball tournament in Chestnut Hill celebrated its 50th anniversary last week.

(</stories/a-golden-anniversary-for-nfa-snowball-tournament,31298>)



**Police locked out of security cameras (/stories/police-locked-out-of-security-cameras,31297)**

The cameras use software that's not compatible with the Philadelphia Police Department's camera monitoring system.

(</stories/police-locked-out-of-security-cameras,31297>)



(/stories/sole-ful-business-closes,31296)

### 'Sole-ful' business closes after 87 years (/stories/sole-ful-business-closes,31296)

Soon, Northwest Philadelphia will be without the shop founded by Carmen Notarianni Sr., and currently operated by his son.



(/stories/septa-gm-certain-regional-rail-lines-will-go-away,31294)

### SEPTA GM: 'Certain regional rail lines will go away' (/stories/septa-gm-certain-regional-rail-lines-will-go-away,31294)

He confirmed what many have feared.

(https://chestnuthillbanners.creativecirclemedia.com/www/delivery/ck.php?

oaparams=2\_bannerid=10\_zoneid=1\_cb=9022ab9e4d\_oadest=http%3A%2F%2Flownes.com%2F)



# Chestnut Hill Local

(/)

(/browse.rss)

8434 Germantown Ave.  
Philadelphia, PA 19118  
215-248-8800 (tel:215-248-8800)

- News (/news/)
- Opinion (/opinion/)
- Obituaries (/obituaries/)
- Entertainment (/entertainment/)
- Neighborhoods (/neighborhoods/)
- Marketplace (/marketplace/)
- Community (/community-news/)
- Wissahickon (/wissahickon\_magazine/)

© COPYRIGHT 2024 THE CHESTNUT HILL LOCAL  
POWERED BY CREATIVE CIRCLE MEDIA SOLUTIONS (HTTP://CREATIVECIRCLEMEDIA.COM)