

BUSINESS

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BUSINESS PROFILE



Rodes is located at 4938 Brownsboro Road.

She of Louisville finds home at Rodes

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Two Louisville families are combining resources to become one of the largest women's clothing retailers in the country.

She of Louisville officially moved into Rodes For Him & For Her on Jan. 2. Rodes president Howard K. Vogt said the move will make Rodes the largest specialty store for women's clothing in the region.

"This really is like a marriage with all of the excitement. We've been talking about this since August," he said.

Rodes began in downtown as a clothing store for men in 1914, but in 2003, they moved to their current location at 4938 Brownsboro Road. They also opened a clothing section called Rodes For Her. The merger with She will make the women's section larger than the men's for the first time.

Vogt believes the larger women's section will benefit the men's side too.

"The women all have husbands and boyfriends," he said. "We're constantly trying to offer something for everyone."

In addition to new clothing lines, She will add skin care, shoes, sportswear and jewelry. Another change is that the workers on the women's side will no longer be on commission.

Vogt said everything worked out perfectly. The stores had less than 5 percent overlap of products, and their computers already operated on the same system.

"Both families have similar ethics," said Vogt. "We're both customer first, and we are both very honest in what we do."

Pat Schilling, who opened She in 1971, wanted to step down from the day-to-day operation when the store's lease ran out in December. She contacted Rodes, another family-owned company, which has been in Louisville five generations.

"I just feel wonderful that this way She will carry on. It's almost like my fifth child," Schilling said. "We'll have the best store in the region."

Schilling will continue as an advisor, and she plans to be actively involved in the store. Schilling's daughters, Jamie Broome and Anne Garvey, will join the Rodes team as buyers.

There was interest from out-of-state buyers, but Schilling wanted her store to remain locally owned.

"The community is very precious to me," Schilling said. "And that's one reason I didn't want the store to go away. And now we'll be She at Rodes."

She's Spring order will begin arriving in January and February. She liquidated its inventory last month and will not be moving much into Rodes immediately.

Rodes offers many services besides retail and custom orders. It will send sales associates into homes for complete wardrobe analysis, and it leads "Dress for Success" seminars. Rodes will also make free alterations on products bought from the store.

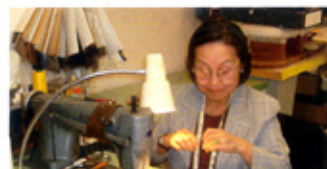
While many of the products are upscale, Rodes strives to create a relaxed family atmosphere.

For more information, visit rodes.com or call 753-7633.



She of Louisville moved into Rodes on Jan. 2. From left, seated: Lawrence Smith Sr. and Pat Schilling, founder of She; standing: Susan and Howard Vogt, owners of Rodes; and Schilling's daughters, Jamie Broome and Anne Garvey, who will work as buyers for Rodes.

JOSH MERIDETH | courtesy



Ba Thi Nguyen is one of more than 10 people who work on alterations at Rodes.



Rodes President Howard K. Vogt and sales consultant Kathy Baker.