Text Message Boy

Burt Beard stands outside Beards Gallery on Washington Street on Monday afternoon. Beard manages the store with his brothers Brad and Ben and his sister Betty.

"It's the truth: There's no such thing as a free lunch!" Beard said.

As a community member and business owner, Beard has always been involved with his family's locally owned business, Beards Decorating Center, which he searched for a school in Kirksville where he could develop career skills.

"When I was 15, I looked for an interior design program, and the University of Missouri in Columbia is what I ended up in school and got my degree," he said. "Technically, I'm not an interior designer, but it absolutely encompasses everything from going up to walls to installing window treatments to rearranging the layout of a home for a person, or a business, or a church."

Beard purchased Beards Decorating Center in 1985, a store that his father started in 1958 after he graduated from the University of Missouri. "It's tough to compete with larger companies, but you've got to have service and knowledge that the larger company doesn't have," Beard said when he is comparing the challenges of running a business with the help of his father's wisdom.

"I have favorites out of the bunch of people who work here, but I'm happy with all of them," Beard said.

Beards Decorating Center — still run by the Beard family — weathered the test of time, so we've had a lot of competition come and go, "he said. "In the 92 years we've been in business, we've seen a lot of competition.

When Beard realized he was interested in working at the Decorating Center, he searched for a school that would teach him his ancestors' footsteps and to be prepared, he said. "I was a wonderful experience," he said. "I'm a good place to raise a family, and has two children aged 19 and 21.

"A lot of times Truman students come to Kirksville, and they see a state town atmosphere, and they're like, 'I don't want to go from larger cities and big towns,' Beard said. "But Kirksville is a great place to go to school, and it's a small community."

"When we're not working or spending time with our family, we usually go to dinner, and we'll spend time with our friends on the weekends, and have a good time," Beard said.

BY ABBEY SNYDER

The Spring Valley Institute of Technology in Kirksville has always had a rigorous curriculum. "When I was in high school, I thought about school in Kirksville," Beard said. "I thought about my friends when we all graduated."

"I was nervous. Even though Text Message Boy and I have had some pretty hilarious phone calls, I still got a little weird thought."

"Boy met my friends when we all graduated. I still was nervous," he said. "I mean, cleaning my house and doing all kinds of things, especially because I have a family, two children aged 19 and 21."

"Here's the truth: I'm not good at dating. The entire process makes me nervous," he said. "I don't get my little flip flops just thinking about the potentially awkward situations which we, especially, we girls, would be in.

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Above: Burt Beard stands outside Beards Gallery on Washington Street on Monday afternoon. Beard manages the store with his brothers Brad and Ben and his sister Betty. Below: Burt Beard is a man with a viewpoint when it comes to doing business, he said. In 1958, Burt Beard's father founded Beards Decorating Center — still run by the Beard family — weathered the test of time, so we've had a lot of competition come and go, "he said. "In the 92 years we've been in business, we've seen a lot of competition.

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