



Dick and Patty Kofsky and sons Rick and Jeff

From Stock Boy to Hardware Store Owner, Service is the Thing

A man who started as a part-time helper in a hardware store during his high school days now is enjoying the opportunity to operate his own store--in Saugatuck.

Dick Kofsky, the owner of Koning Hardware, purchased the business from Heath Crow and Jean Simonson effective Feb. 1. For more than a month now the new owner and his family have been at work seeking to put their own imprint on the 94-year-old institution without changing its image of service to the community.

Kofsky started his hardware career in 1948 in Crystal Lake, Ill., working after school and weekends during high school.

He attended college at Valparaiso University in Indiana and graduated in 1954 with a bachelor of science in electrical engineering. He entered the Navy in June 1954, went to officer candidate school at Newport, R.I., and emerged as an ensign in March 1955. After flight training at Pensacola, Fla., he spent 5½ years on active duty, flying four-engined Lockheed Super-Constellation planes on radar patrol over the North Atlantic.

After the service he worked in engineering for a year and then became assistant buyer in the housewares department of Ace Hardware Corp. for about five years. Then he started managing stores, first in Rolling Meadows, then Libertyville and last in Mundelein, Ill., before purchasing Koning Hardware.

He and his wife, Patty, were married in September 1953. She is a registered nurse and a surgical specialist with training in emergency room, intensive care and cardiac care. She recently was instructor of surgical technique at Downey Veterans Hospital.

Their children are Rick, 20; Kristine, 19 and Jeff, 16. Rick is working at the store after 1½ years at Lake County Junior College. Kristine is in her second year at Lake County Junior College and will start nurse's training this fall at Rush Medical Center in Chicago. Jeff is a sophomore at Saugatuck High School.

Kofsky is working on some remodeling of the store, including painting the ceiling, installing new floors and lighting fixtures, new shelving and blocking up some of the back windows.

He plans to increase the variety and selection of items carried in inventory. The store has acquired the Ace Hardware franchise for the area which, he said, will increase the buying power and selection of merchandise. He will continue to carry the Martin Senour line of paints.

The tradition of the store is to be of service to the community, "which I think is the most important thing," he said.

And the store offers one non-traditional thing for free: Yardsticks with inches on one side and centimeters on the other side.