



Milton Julian

Long considered Chapel Hill's "ultimate haberdasher", Milton Julian is a fashion innovator and master retailer who put the Southern Part of Heaven on the sartorial map.

- In 1939, Julian arrived in Chapel Hill to attend the School of Law. He took a break to serve in the Army Air Corps during World War II and returned to town in 1945 to finish his studies. He went to work at Julian's, the clothing store owned by his brother, Maurice. The two first worked together renting and selling bikes to Carolina students.
- In 1948, Milton decided to strike out on his own, opening Milton's Clothing Cupboard first on West Franklin Street, and later in the 100 block of East Franklin. His wife, Virginia, came up with the name, based on her vision for the store as a comfortable den. When he first opened, rent was \$35/month.

- Milton's retail empire expanded in the 1960s and '70s to include stores in Atlanta, Dallas and Charlotte. The Charlotte store is still owned and operated by his son, Bruce. Milton left store-front retailing in 1989, but continued to serve local gentlemen with a "mobile" service.

Milton so loves Chapel Hill and the University that he asked Al Muirhead to build a 2/3-size Old Well replica for the Franklin Street store. It was a hit with regulars, local kids and visiting alums. Milton also ordered suit jacket and sports coat linings emblazoned with a repeating pattern of tiny Old Wells. These are still wildly popular with Carolina fans near and far.

He pioneered the "Ivy league" or preppy look in the South, and brought more urban tailoring to businessmen outside the big cities. He sold Harris Tweed jackets, Gant shirts and Bass Weejun shoes to a loyal clientele that included Carolina students and professionals, who shopped in stores and via mail-order (something else he pioneered). UNC basketball standout George Glamack was an early customer, and Milton still remembers his shoe size: 13D. Milton also supplied shirts to Nat "King" Cole.

Downtown Chapel Hill was the main commercial strip in the early days. The free diagonal parking along a two-lane Franklin Street encouraged people to stop and shop, especially during Milton's infamous sales like the Mad Nite Zonker Mega Sale or the Frogstrangler. The dramatically slashed prices drew well-dressed men from all over, and Milton's affinity for sales and discounts earned him the nickname "the poor man's Brooks Brothers".

"I gave students insight on how to dress like a man, and helped men dress with more style," he recalls. "I was innovative, I educated and I had a lot of fun. Milton's wasn't a club, but it was the next best thing to it."