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# Africatown Honors 30 years of Earl's Cuts & Styles

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Photos: Anthony Tackett

Midtown Center was transformed from the former post office then car dealership into a high class affair full of community members with deep roots in the Central District, all assembled to attend the Earls Cuts & Styles 30 Year Anniversary Roast.

The event, sponsored by Africatown-Central District Preservation & Development Association, was designed to bring the community together to honor Earl and celebrate a milestone in his business as Earls Cuts & Styles eclipses the 30 year mark in business.

According to Earl, he was worried initially about the event fearing that the turnout would be low. However, all of his fears quickly dissipated as the Midtown Center was full to capacity and what was billed as a roast of Earl turned into a love fest with speaker after speaker who was supposed to be roasting Earl, instead highlighting Earls impact on them, the Central District, and beyond.

One could argue that Earl Lancaster may very well be one of the most influential and well respected Seattle barbers of his generation. Earl was a protege of Gary Ladd Sr., a barber legend in his own rite who in the 80s and 90s was very much an anchor of the community that Earl is today.

The event had the feeling of a homecoming or family reunion which was much needed for a community that has been increasingly fractured and displaced due to gentrification.

Tonight it was beautiful to see the community come together like this. Earl touched so many people across his three decades in business and many of those same people are assembled here this evening to show Earl love. said Laketih Asphy, a long time friend and client of Earls, who owns the Presidential Party Bus company. The turnout tonight and the vibe is a direct reflection of the love the community has for Earl and his shop. added Asphy.

Another one of the evenings speakers was Paul Hinton of Pauls Custom Cuts, who reminisced about starting off as a barber working in Earls shop and how 6 years later he had a shop of his own. Earl taught me so much and gave me my start. said Paul Hinton

According to K. Wyking Garrett, of Africatown, Earls Cuts & Styles is more than just a business it is an institution in the Black community of Seattle and an epicenter of culture.

We are here tonight celebrating 30 years of a community institution. Barber shops like Earls are the very heart of our community and are a sacred space. The community loves Earl and that is why tonight is like a family reunion, all types of connections happening, look the photo booth has been full all night of people capturing memories.

You can see right here that Earl means a lot to the community, he is the last man standing that lets people know that this is their home. This is very important it is positive energy to keep going, to keep our community together and build upon it in 2019. said Garrett

2019 is indeed set to be a year of positive energy for Earl as he will move his business right across the street to the new Liberty Bank Building which is opening in the spring. Around the same time that Midtown Center will meet its fate with the wrecking ball to make way for new housing developments by Africatown as well as Lake Union Partners that will begin to take shape in 2021 and add some affordable housing as well as affordable commercial space to for African American businesses like Earls who want to open up shop in the neighborhood.

As the night drew to a close, Earl said that he was overwhelmed by the outpouring of love from the community.

Trying his best to hold back tears, Earl said I never expected this so many people are here to wish me well. I didnt realize the neighborhood felt this way about me.

Someone who overheard Earl chimed in How could we feel any other way about you bro?