

# Fancy footwork path to dream job

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A famous adage by Mark Twain has long claimed that "clothes make the man," but for one Sheridan alumni, success is all about the shoes.

Nicknamed "Canada's Shoe Guru," Ron White graduated from Sheridan's Retail Management program in 1990. He then went to work for Bretton's department store, where he was assigned to the shoe department.

"I didn't want to go into shoes," said White. "I was a clothing guy. I was going to be the guy who was going to move to New York and take over Saks Fifth Avenue."

White learned as much as he could during his time at Bretton's, and then moved on to an orthopedic shoe store. It was here that the idea for The Foot Shoppe first began.

"All the people at Bretton's used to come in and say, 'which ones are the most comfortable?' and then when I was at [the] orthopedic shoe store, everybody would come in and say, 'well, these are really comfortable, but they look like Kleenex boxes on my feet,'" said White. "I realized that they were at opposite ends of the spectrum and there was nobody in the middle rolling them together and [I said], 'why don't I do this?'"

And that's how, at 23 years old, the young man from Winnipeg decided to open his own luxury shoe store.

"My goal from the get-go was to make fashion that felt wonderful," he said.

Now, 18 years after his graduation and with six stores across the GTA bearing his name,

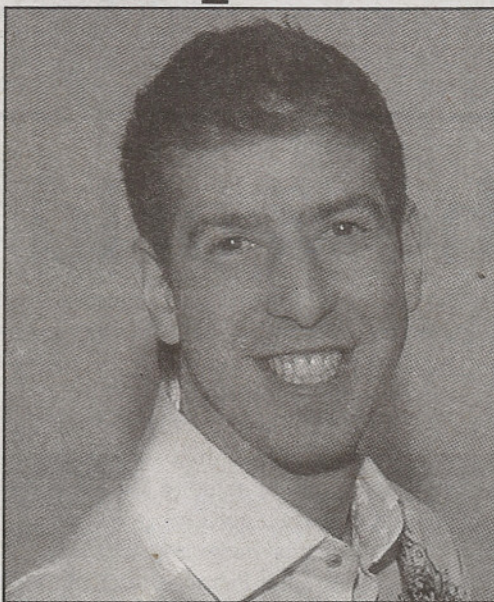


PHOTO COURTESY OF RON WHITE  
**Ron White was inducted into Sheridan's Hall of Fame in 2007.**

White is still giving back to college that gave him his start.

"I truly know that Sheridan helped get me on my path," he said. "I feel like I owe a debt of gratitude to [them]. They gave me the start on this path that I'm on, and every month and every year it keeps getting better."

Indeed, these days everything seems to be coming up Ron White. His list of celebrity clientele now includes Sarah, Duchess of York, Catherine Zeta-Jones, Bruce Willis, Goldie

Hawn, Holly Hunter, Tom Cochrane, Leslie Roberts, and Jeanne Becker.

But White insists that he couldn't have made it this far without the education he received right here at Sheridan.

"I felt that when I was at Sheridan, they pushed us to the nth degree," he said. "By pushing us beyond what we thought we could do, it actually showed us how much we could do."

In 2007, Sheridan recognized White's accomplishments by inducting him into the Hall of Fame.

"I was actually quite blown away [by it]. I felt too young," he said with a laugh. "I feel like I'm just on the path of where I'm going. I haven't yet arrived at what it is I'm going to ultimately do. It's definitely the biggest honour I've received in my business career, hands down."

With years of successful business under his belt, White has a few words of wisdom to pass along to this year's graduates:

"Things that I pass on to someone starting off in their career are things that I did that worked for me," he said. "One of those things is, once you figure out what you want to do, you put your blinders on and your head down, and you go do it. Don't listen to all the naysayers. When you want to do something and it tends to be a little out of the norm, that's when it sticks out the most."

"Dini Petty became a mentor of mine years ago, and she used to say, 'take the leap and the net will appear,' and that sticks in the back of my mind, because if you go for it, you find a way."