

SZABO SHOES:

99 Years

By Gay A. Christensen-Dean

Mr. and Mrs. Szabo, originally from Hungary, moved to Cleveland, Ohio from St. Louis in 1920. They opened a shoe store at West 25th Street and Lorain, and sometime later moved the store to West 117th Street and Detroit.

Second generation: Sons Louis, a podiatrist, and Julius, moved the store to West 119th Street and Lorain. Julius and his son Ernie ran the store.

Third generation: Ernie and his father Julius closed the West 119th store. Julius retired and Ernie moved the business to 20900 Center Ridge Road, Rocky River in 1953. Szabo Shoes and the Rustic Restaurant on Center Ridge Road, pre-dated the opening of the original Westgate Shopping Center across the street on Center Ridge.

Fourth generation: As of 2019, Ernie's son Ulric owned the business. Mary, the wife of Louis, owned the property. Ulric decided that he wanted out of the shoe business to pursue other endeavors, so sadly, the business closed in November, 2019.

Szabo Shoes was a popular place. They specialized in large sizes, wide and extra wide, and narrow and extra narrow. It was THE place to go if your feet were hard to fit. They fitted all the high school players in Rocky River and surrounding areas for athletic shoes. Over the years, they even serviced the Cleveland Browns football players and Cleveland Cavaliers basketball players.

The building architecture is of the classic mid-century modern style.



(This article was written in November 2019.)