



Bernie Waddleton, a resident of the Somerset section of Franklin, has retired after working for 45 years at Metropolitan Window Fashions at Fabricland in North Plainfield.

Somerset man retires after 45 years

By **JEFF WEBER**
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In an age when so many people change jobs every two or three years, a person sticking with a profession for 45 years is almost surprising.

But how about 45 years? That's how long Bernie Waddleton, a resident of the Somerset section of Franklin, worked at Metropolitan Window Fashions at Fabricland in North Plainfield before retiring on Dec. 3.

Waddleton, 78, was around long enough to work with the store's origi-

nal owner, Philip Heyman, and two subsequent family owners, including Philip's grandson, current owner Bruce Heyman.

Philip dubbed Waddleton "Mr. Terrific" shortly after Waddleton's arrival at the Route 22 fabric store — then known as Fabric Land — in 1964 as a veteran drapery salesman and installer. Waddleton, then 33, knew the ropes of the business and quickly became popular with employees and customers alike.

A staple of the store's ready-made curtain depart-

ment, Waddleton was honored Dec. 3 on Top Customer Sale Night with a champagne toast by more than 100 of the store's most loyal shoppers. Bruce Heyman capped the night with an appropriate send-off.

"Customers always think Bernie owns the store," he said. "They get this idea because of his devotion, friendly style and talent for helping people."

Waddleton returned the favor with some words of his own.

"I've really loved my job at Fabricland — interacting and helping people

with their decorating needs," said Waddleton, who also was thrown a party on Dec. 6 by 35 of the store's employees, family members and friends. "I've enjoyed keeping up with the latest trends in window fashions and giving my customers lots of ideas."

That wasn't easy to do, considering how many times fashions have changed. But Waddleton pulled it off in each decade — even in the highly demanding 2000s, when interior decorating styles

See **Retire**, Page B2

Retire

FROM PAGE B1

changed seemingly every season.

The real secret behind his success wasn't in his keen eye, however. It was in how he treated others.

"I treated my customers just the way I'd want to be treated," he said, "so I've

always tried to make their shopping trip an enjoyable experience."

Although an energetic 78, Waddleton is looking forward to retirement and spending more time with his family and the many

people who have made his long, rewarding life special.

"I've been blessed with a wonderful life," he said, "and I'm grateful to have met and helped so many people."