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What I do: Joseph Bonardi is a hair specialist and wig designer

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My mother owned and operated a beauty school in northern Illinois. As I was growing up, it seemed a comfortable choice to attend hair technical school. I was offered an art scholarship in high school but I chose hair over college and am extremely pleased with my choice.

My first motivation was to learn my craft from the best sources so I could be proud of my work. I completed the requisite hours at the Scientific College of Beauty Culture in Madison. I did an apprenticeship at Coiffures International for two years and worked there for six. I've taken advanced courses from Vidal Sassoon, Aveda, Tony and Guy, Wella and many others. Now, I'm motivated by pleasing my clients, some of whom I've known for over 20 years.



I have been licensed since age 18, so doing hair has been a lifelong commitment. My job is to listen to each client to understand exactly what they want from the hair service. I allow plenty of time during each appointment as I want my clients to be happy with their new look.

My expertise is in hair cutting, hair coloring, straightening and permanent waving and formal and informal styling. It's important that I keep current on today's hairstyles for both men and women. Because of my experience in doing period hair styles, I do formal, modern styles for weddings and other occasions.

I specialize in theater wig design, and was the primary wig designer for the Madison Repertory for 11 years. I've also worked in the theater departments of UW-Madison, Edgewood College, Madison Area Technical College, Madison Opera and Madison Savoyards. I conduct archival research when designing wigs for specific time periods.

I also locate, buy and custom-fit affordable, realistic wigs for women dealing with hair loss due to medical treatment. It's important that the wig fits properly and looks natural.

It's rewarding to me when a client tells me how many compliments they get on their hair between visits to my shop. In the theater, it's gratifying to hear that the audience never realized the actors were wearing wigs because they looked natural.

I've talked to many young people wanting to go into cosmetology and I tell them get the basics at tech school first, then take advanced courses. Being around other well-trained people keeps your standards high.

What I Do features area residents who have interesting or unique jobs. The column runs every Tuesday. To suggest someone to feature, contact Jill Carlson at jillcarlson1957@gmail.com with the name, contact information and a brief description of what the person does.