

# Rosner's Drugs at Speedway calling it quits

For more than half a century, Rosner's Pharmacy has served as a meeting place, drugstore and landmark for the town of Speedway.

## Speedway

But when Richard H. "Dick" Rosner locks the drugstore door at the corner of Main and 16th streets for the last time tonight, an era will end.

Main Street's oldest family business will be no more. In its heyday, Rosner's was always busy. When Speedway High School had no cafeteria, students would go there for lunch. Children would buy penny candy and hang out there.

It was one of the few places that offered flavored fountain drinks, and it did a booming soda business. It annually would stay open around-the-clock on the day before the 500-Mile Race.

Now it is only an old brick building full of fond memories and items that are on sale for half-price.

"They used to pack in here," recalls the brown-eyed Rosner, 57, president of Rosner Drug Stores Inc. A second store, which had been on Lafayette Road, was closed in 1962.

### Only a matter of time

Despite the happy recollections, Rosner knows that it was only a matter of time before the drugstore would have to be closed. He has had some problems with his health, and the stress of running a business more than 80 hours a week was no help.

And with the growth of chain drugstores and shopping malls, he found that although he could

provide a personal touch, he just couldn't compete.

For many years, he and brother Paul ran the store together. But Paul turned full control over to Dick about three years ago, when they realized the business couldn't support both of them.

"I wasn't ready to close it up," said silver-haired, bespectacled Dick Rosner.

### Since early '20s

"I'm not sure exactly when it opened up," said Rosner, who's been running the pharmacy for 30 years. His best guess is that it started in the early '20s.

That may be a conservative estimate. In a town history put together in 1976 by the Speedway Civic Committee's history committee, writer Mary Hayes reported that the red brick building was constructed in 1915 by Joseph Rosner for sons Frank and William.

Frank got the south half of the building for a grocery, and Bill got the north half for the pharmacy. Dick's father, Henry Rosner, combined the two stores. Henry was Bill's brother.

Hayes described the store as "an anchor to Main Street businesses."

"It was the kids' center for penny candy and ice cream cones," Hayes wrote. "Bill Rosner accommodated those residents who did not want a mailbox for rural delivery on West Tenth Street."



Rosner's Pharmacy a few years after construction in 1915.



Richard H. Rosner  
"They used to pack in here"

The building still has two upstairs apartments. One was occupied by Ernest McDonald, the first doctor to practice in Speedway, Hayes reported.

Rosner now plans to lease out the building, he said he's had two or three proposals, but none



The News Photo, Steven Pockrass

### Current view of historic drugstore.

of them is to keep the building as a drugstore.

He soon will start work at the pharmacy at the Marsh Supermarket on Crawfordsville Road.

"It was a big decision to make," Rosner said. "I'm going to miss a lot of people."

He's both sad and happy.

"I've never worked for anybody else before," Rosner said, but "I'm looking forward to not having all the strain and stress."

— STEVEN POKKRASS