

Waite's Cleaners, located on Old Shell Road, is the Mobile Area Chamber's Small Business of the Month. Pictured here Clifford Waite, left, office development manager; and company owner Leland Waite. Clifford is the third generation of Waites to work in the family-owned dry cleaning business.



# Business is Buttoned Up at Waite's Cleaners

Do you read the labels on your clothes? While some do, others are guilty of not paying much attention to them until it's laundry time. That's where **Waite's Cleaners Inc.** comes in.

Celebrating 60 years in business this year, the dry-cleaning/laundry business offers free home or business pickup and delivery, formal wear (including wedding dresses) cleaning and preservation, alteration and stain removal, and participates in the recycled hanger program, according to company owner **Leland Waite**. With a customer base that includes the Alabama Gulf Coast and parts of Mississippi, Waite's Cleaners is the

Mobile Area Chamber's Small Business of the Month.

Leland's father, **Taylor Waite**, opened the family business in 1952 as a simple neighborhood dry-cleaning service to help his neighbors during a rough economic period. He would pick up dry cleaning and laundry from families with both spouses working and return them cleaned and ready to wear. It wasn't long before word of his excellent work spread.

As the years passed, Leland, the youngest son, learned the business and ownership was passed on to him. He focused on building the business by ensuring quality work. The staff

included his mother, **Sara Waite**, his sister, **Mary Waite**, and two of his aunts. Eventually, Waite's Cleaners grew to employ 21 people. Today, Leland's son Clifford also works in the family business.

One of the biggest challenges Waite encounters daily is buttons. "We take in approximately 10 to 15 suits with buttons and have to keep up with up to 50 buttons a day. Because if one gets lost, we have to shop around to find a match. So we have to be very attentive of garments with buttons to make sure they're secured."

Waite's offers general laundry services and dry-cleaning, using fluids

to remove soil and stains from fabric with little to no water. "I try to educate people about the different types of material and what to look for especially when they're shopping for clothes," said Leland.

Leland attributes the success of the family business to customers' loyalty for customer service. "That's all it is."

Go to [mobilechamber.com/award.asp](http://mobilechamber.com/award.asp) to submit a Small Business of the Month nomination, or contact Danette Richards at 431-8652 or [drichards@mobilechamber.com](mailto:drichards@mobilechamber.com).