

Dr. Ernest Lefever begins transition to full retirement

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LAPEER — In 1981, Ernest Lefever and his wife, Vickie, moved to Lapeer from Davison, and he opened a podiatry practice on M-24 near the hospital.

He started out sharing building space with other offices, but said he would always look out the window at the empty lot next door and dream about building an office there. He did just that in 1992, building Foot Specialists of Lapeer at 1390 N. Main St.

Now, at 67, Lefever is ready to turn the business over to someone else and start a gradual journey to complete retirement.

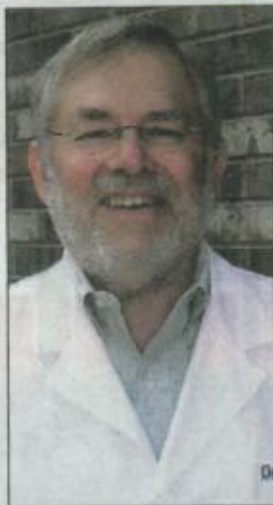
Monday was the first day the office was open under Mark Williams, who has been practicing podiatry for years at Professional Foot and Ankle Centers in Davison and Lapeer, along with Nicholas Post-Vasold.

Long-time patients need not panic, however. Lefever isn't planning to hang up his white coat for good just yet. Through what he calls a very "congenial" agreement, he intends to see patients at Williams' office several days a week.

"It's a slowdown for me," he said. "I'm still going to be here a significant amount of time. I don't want to work past 70, so I'd say three more years... Four-day weekends, that's what we're aiming for here."

The time was just right, Lefever said. Vickie, also 67, has worked as his office manager since around 1982, and he said she was ready to retire. They started looking into selling four years ago, things fell

into place, he found a buyer he had confidence in, and the deal was done.



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Ernest Lefever will run the office in a way that would honor his method of doing business — accommodating the patients in every way. The transition, he said, has been seamless and Williams even kept on the rest of Lefever's staff.

"It's how you handle not just the changes, but everything," Lefever said of running a successful business. "The whole purpose has to be for the patient... Really, it's the old Golden Rule thing — If you take that to your practice, you can't fail."

"I'm very happy to let somebody else run the business," he said. "But I still love what I do. I love making people feel better and taking care of them."

Lefever got into podiatry after he started talking to some friends in the field as he was working as an X-ray technician in a hospital in Evanston, Ill.

"I was interested in medicine in general," he said. "It just intrigued the heck out of me — the way the human body works."

So, he completed the schooling and a residency and then practiced in Davison for a year and a half before coming to Lapeer, and the community has definitely become home in the past 32 years.

"We love Lapeer," he said. "We've become a part of it, really. We have many very good friends. It's home for us."

Lefever is on the Lapeer County Bank and Trust board and is also a member of the Lapeer Optimist Club.

He said he is confi-