

# WINTER PARK

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# Neighbors

## The Simmons Family

Have Called Winter Park Home for More Than Six Decades





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BY CAROLINE MALONE

PHOTOS SUBMITTED BY ROBIN AND ROBERT SIMMONS JR



Winter Park isn't a typical small town to Robert Simmons Jr. — Bobby Jr. as his friends and family know him — it's his birth place and the place he's called home for more than six decades.

Bobby Jr and his wife, Robin, met in Winter Park where they both were born and raised. The couple recently celebrated their five year wedding anniversary together

"We actually met at my father's surprise birthday party," said Bobby Jr. "The relationship thrived and grew from there."

Bobby Jr's father is Robert (Bob) Simmons Sr., the original founder and owner of Simmons Jewelers, who celebrated his 93rd birthday this year. While Bobby Jr has been the store owner for more than 20 years, Bob Sr continues to work on watches, engrave jewelry and set diamonds.

When Bobby's father first moved here from Alabama and started working in the jewelry business, he joined a long-standing community of artists and entrepreneurs who call this town home including the Millers of Miller's Hardware and the Bumby family. Simmons Jewelers is the longest running store on Park Avenue – it first opened in 1953.

"Winter Park has proven to be extremely important to our family's business and to the things that matter to me," Bobby Jr. shared. "I thank my father for teaching me the trade."

One of the most exciting pieces that the Simmons' have acquired is a vintage Rolex from 1929. "The last one that was available had sold on eBay for \$1.14 million," according to Bobby Jr.

Bobby Jr values estate and vintage jewelry. "I really like the idea that a piece has a history; I wonder where something has been before and who else wore it. I love feeling like I've found an item that someone else appreciated before I did. It's about the memories and the significance of the piece, as well as the exceptional quality and the craftsmanship," he shared.

He and his father also have a love of vintage cars, including a Model T and a Model A Roadster, and motorcycles such as a Honda Gold Wing and a Boss Hoss V8.



Bobby Jr and his dad Bob Sr



Chiwa, their Chihuahua, greeting customers at Simmons Jewelers



Bling Bling, their Pomeranian

Bobby Jr, a 1972 graduate of Colonial High School, and Robin, a 1982 graduate of Winter Park High School, have a few favorite stops and shops around town including Pannullo's Italian Restaurant on Park Avenue. They also enjoy going on sunset wine and boat tours with their friends, Tom and Pam Smith.

The couple also spend time with their two pet dogs, Chiwa, an eight-year-old black Chihuahua and Bling Bling a three-year-old sable tri-colored Pomeranian – both are rescues that enjoy taking walks along Park Avenue and also meeting-and-greeting customers regularly at the store. Bobby Jr and Robin love traveling and visiting their vacation river home in North Florida or Melbourne Beach.

The couple live just a few blocks away from Park Avenue and their jewelry shop. "Everyone here at Simmons Jewelers really wants to get to know each customer," both Bobby and Robin agreed. "Winter Park is full of history with interesting people to meet. If you haven't been here yet, we'd love to meet you so please stop-by and say 'hello.'"

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