Michael Eure Show Transcript
Wake Tech School of Barbering
Recorded 11/19/17

EURE: Hello this is Michael Eure, and I'd like to invite you to The Michael Eure Show featuring student hosts and very special guests talking about a variety of interesting topics. You can find us on the Eagle Stream YouTube Channel.

EURE: Welcome back to the Michael Eure Show. We're here today with Graham at the School of Barbering at Wake Tech. So tell us a little bit about your general student clientele.

GRAHAM: Well, our program has been here since last year September 2016. We've actually had our first graduation this past Tuesday. Our first graduating class so that was exciting. Our program is actually 1,600 hours the state requires you to have 1,528 hours. Our hours of for schooling is for full-time is Monday through Friday only 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM. And then for our part-time it's Tuesday through Friday from 6:00 to 10:00 and Saturday from 8:00 to 12:00. Full-time is a year, part-time is a year and a half. We do provide services for the general public. We do those hours between 11:00 and about 2:30 every day.

EURE: Every day?

GRAHAM: Every day, Monday through Friday. And then we also do, that's our daytime hours. Then we have our part-time or evening hours, which is from 6:00 PM to 9:00 PM. And then we do Saturdays from 9:00 to 12:00. Saturdays so we opened to the public.

EURE: And I've had the honor of having my hair cut from your folks and I need it done today, so-

GRAHAM: We're here.

EURE: We're gonna do a before and after. He's got me on a still shot, but we're gonna show them what it looks like when you get finished. Okay. Now tell us a little bit about some of your community outreach, because I know that with the Museum of History you have set up a booth, but I've also seen you cut hair at different-

GRAHAM: Yeah.

EURE: Community events, how do people request that?

GRAHAM: They can reach me on, by phone, either here, my number 919-866-5727. Or they can email me at wkgraham, that's G-R-A-H-A-M at waketech.edu. They have any events they want us to participate in. One thing I tell my students that we had a

responsibility not just to service our community, but we also have the responsibility to serve our community to the barbers. And so we had the privilege to partner with the YMCA. We did some haircuts for students, for picture day. Some of the students were less fortunate. We also reached out, have a partnership with the Salvation Army, we cut hair. That's usually our part-time evening program, which does haircuts with them as well. We also partner with the museum. We also did a shelter homeless shelter, we cut hair as well there as well. And so we just all about trying to give opportunities to give back to community with our services.

EURE: Yeah, and barbershops are such a unique location.

GRAHAM: Yeah-

EURE: Where people get together and socialize. So we know, I certainly know about the black barber experience, but I also grew up looking at Andy Griffith.

GRAHAM: Yeah.

EURE: It looks like they do about the same thing.

GRAHAM: It's the same, it's the same thing.

EURE: So your students are very diverse and they cut all kinds of hair.

GRAHAM: Yes, that's right because, one joke I always joke on my students I tell them that hair only has one color and that color's green. Because some is long some is curly some is straight some is wavy but at the end of the day you should learn how to cut all types of hair. And you're exactly right that's the one thing the experience you get from a barbershop regardless. We had a barbershop any community, the barbershop's always been the pillars of those communities, so that goes back to how I tell my students why it's important to reach out and do service in their community, and servicing them, as well. But to really get back to talking about some of the same things from in the black barbershop, one thing that we go back to our barber history because barber history anyway, way back, as they say the Roman periods, they kind of say-

EURE: Or the Egyptian period.

GRAHAM: Or the Egyptian period, well that's where the Egyptian period were beautified. They say the Roman period was supposed to been the period when the camaraderie started. With the bath houses and things like that. One thing with the black barbershop, I think we have held on to that kind of tradition. Especially post Civil War time. One thing about the black barbershop, it's been the place if it wasn't church, that's where we went to get the latest news. Matter fact, some history has it that that's where a lot of the medical doctors were coming, promoting inside the

barbershops, different local legislative politicians, they would use the barbershops. So if it's not the church, they would come to their barbershop in our communities.

EURE: And I think it is a cross-cultural thing because a lot of people don't know this but the founding of North Carolina Central as North Carolina College for Negros and the Chitauga and all that. The barber of the Dukes family was very instrumental in convincing the Dukes to help them get Central started, so that's one thing. And then what do you know and what do you think about the barbershop quartets?

GRAHAM: I think we still make a lot of noise still in the barbershop. [LAUGH] But yes, that's another one of our history with the cortets is the, you don't see them too much anymore. But there's some people that still holds onto that culture. But you know, one thing again, speaking of like the cortets, that's again, the barbershop has always been a hub for a little bit of everything, for everybody. From people come in that wanted to sell music to want to become an artist, to meet somebody that need to be an artist. The barbershop is a hub for-

EURE: Networking,

GRAHAM: Just about everything in networking that you would need, yeah.

EURE: Now, There are so many new fangled companies going on in the world. So tell us about some of the new services. Cuz I know barbershops now, they have all kinds, they have bars. They have sports themes. And some of them are upscale in other ways. Do you go through that marketing concept with your students?

GRAHAM: Yes, I do. Actually, one thing that brings up one of our slogans for our program is the very first business school barber. So we want to make sure they understand not only just how to have a good year but how to run a good business. So being here at Lane Tech, we have opporuntity to partner with our small business, Lane Tech's small business center which shameless plug here but we have probably one of the best small business centers and community college-wise. I was able to partnership with Miss Katie Gills at the entrepreneurship initiative, and we have a business component piece that is actually added into the program. So when they finish our program, not only will they get a haircut certificate, they will also get an entrepreneurship certificate. And that's important because like you said going back to now that shops or which is exciting to see. There is no longer just a traditional barbershop now you have actually said adding a bar in there and becoming more of a spa setting which is exciting for the industry. Because I would say or I would say probably the past seven to ten years it's been a shift where for a while a lot of the barbershops were being challenged, I would say, from a lot of hair cuttery chains. That came in, and since the boom of beards now being accepted in the work place and people want to go back to doing straight razor shaves, that kind of nostalgia thing. So barbershops have been Really peaked time for us, because the barbershops has been making a come back, where people are looking, or gentlemen are looking, and ladies, are looking for that spa experience, but at a barbershop.

EURE: Okay.

GRAHAM: And so, yeah, so it is definitely.

EURE: I'm gonna expand a little bit on something that you said I thought it was very important in partnering with the small business center, and this whole production is a partnership, and I really am glad to see student services working with academic affairs, and that's on the curriculum side, but now you're with workforce and continuing ed. So we had went through three different silos and we are all working together, and I think it's important if Wake Tech has services that our students know. And I know some of your students have degrees, so this is not just something that people do.

GRAHAM: Right.

EURE: Some people, I know in your program may have Doctor's, or Master's, or Bachelor's, I certainly know some,

GRAHAM: Right.

EURE: But this is a passion that people have, right?

GRAHAM: Yeah, yeah, we have, again going back to, not only do we have a very diverse student body or group, but we also have, like you said, different ages. We range from anywhere from backgrounds, various educational background. So yes, most of the time people is getting involved is usually a passion, is usually probably a second career, could be a retirement plan for some folks, and it could be a first time career for others as well. But yeah, we have a very diverse group, and it is, you have to be passionate. It's an art so.

EURE: Right, and I go to a barbershop downtown, in the old black business district, on Kirkland Street.

GRAHAM: Yeah, classic.

EURE: Yes, but one thing, my barber is a biologist as well.

GRAHAM: Wow.

EURE: But his father owned the shop, so this is like his interitance, but he's also an artist. So a lot of barbers have a lot of other skills, and all that conversation comes about in the barbershop, because of the diversity of the barbers.

GRAHAM: Yeah, and that's the experience you bring to the shop, right? So you have, like you said, even the barbers themselves has various backgrounds. So they can

bring that to their barber experience. I know some barbers that, well, one other thing too that, and it kind of goes back to why I support and understand entrepreneurship. One thing that I tell my students, and I try to point out to them is that, understanding how to run a successful barbershop, it's just the same fundamental things you would need to be able to start and run any type of business. So, and you're not stuck to just cutting hair.

EURE: Right.

GRAHAM: Whatever your other passions you may have or other skills you may have, you can still use those same fundamental skills you need to start your business, to anything else.

EURE: Yeah, and I think that the customer service is awesome and it determines what barbershop you go to based on the atmosphere.

GRAHAM: Yeah.

EURE: I wouldn't say that you're a therapist, but you do provide therapy for some people, right?

GRAHAM: Yeah, yeah, it's funny, because I shared an article with my class, and about, I found it was actually on PsychologyToday.com, and they had an article talking about the hair industry, how that is a cheaper version of getting therapy sessions.

EURE: Okay.

GRAHAM: Because you have this 30 minutes or an hour time, time for somebody to be able to get stuff off your chest, and just naturally that you have confidentiality, you don't share other people's experiences. But, yeah, I get customers all the time that tell me, I don't know why I get in this chair, and I feel like I wanna tell all my business, but then that's the kind of experience that you want them to have.

EURE: Exactly.

GRAHAM: That you want to have that experience that, at least for me, and one thing I try to pass on to my students, is that you want it to be a place just to get away from it all, cuz it's always been that, as you're joking, saying, the men's gentleman club, or what have you. So, yeah, so there's a question. Yeah, I didn't say that, question? Yes.

EURE: Okay. Yeah, we're gonna show the video. Thank you so much, Dr. Roddenberry.

GRAHAM: Yes sir, thank you.

EURE: We're gonna cut, and look, and go on.

COMMERCIAL BREAK:

GRAHAM: My name is William Graham and I am a licensed Master Barber and Educator.

HENDERSON: My name is Brian Henderson. I am a Barber Instructor and also a Barber.

GRAHAM: A few of the things that I have noticed since being in the profession is one, the art of cutting hair has gone to the next level. A lot of the barbers now are getting into hair art and hair design, and because of the growth in the area, because of the Raleigh, Durham area of North Carolina becoming one of the number one places to live, you find more people relocating here. So as it happened, there has been a lot of hair cutter change move to the area as well, to hire barbers, looking to hire barbers, and also to give the opportunities for barbers to start their own businesses as well.

HENDERSON: I was in the barbering field. When I started the program, I recently move back to Raleigh, and in the barbering field it takes a while to build up your clientele list. It takes a little while, and I was at a point where I needed income, and I needed something stable, and so I came to Wake Tech for the program to help me get my certification. I went through the North Carolina State Board, Barber Board Examiners, and training instructors of course. I went online and I researched the information myself, and I found that Wake Tech offered the program, and I went about signing up for it.

GRAHAM: Well some detail into the training is actually you'll learn anywhere from not only just cutting hair, but also styling hair, also being familiar with using different chemical textures, services as well, and also customer service, and also how to start your own business as well. Because of the quality training that Wake Tech offer their students, whenever I'm looking for a barber, I would definitely contact Wake Tech first, and also when I have any other peers that look for a student, I recommend Wake Tech as well.

HENDERSON: No sooner than I finished the program, I had already had individuals that work for the barber college that I currently work at, and they were just waiting for me to finish my certification from Wake Tech. The training that you get in the classroom is the same training that you're gonna use in the workforce.

GRAHAM: After being in the industry does long, I still learn something new from tools, to equipments, to new products, and different styles of techniques are constantly changing, so you can never stop learning.

HENDERSON: Going through Wake Tech, the training procedures that they take you through for an instructor to pass the North Carolina State Board, are above and beyond. So, if this is some place, if this is something that you're looking to do, the credentials and certifications are out there, but you have to choose the right place to go to, and Wake Tech is that place.

EURE: All right. We're back with Graham. So we really are enjoying this, and I love this whole environment, and it's very much like a real, real barbershop.

GRAHAM: Yes.

EURE: So tell me what is it like? Does it simulate? Do people come in here and have all kinds of conversations and recreate those kind of barbershop experiences?

GRAHAM: Well, we can only have so much things that goes on in the barbershop. We still-

EURE: I mean, in this school yeah. The clean stuff.

GRAHAM: The clean stuff, there you go. But yes, we do, when they come for the shop, when we start at 11 o'clock, the students actually get a chance to put the opportunity to practice customer service. So I have them greet the customers, and sign them in, and I tell them be themselves, and I try not to be the type of instructor to be right on top of them.

EURE: Okay.

GRAHAM: I try to let them learn how to start, know how to communicate with their clients. Of course, I'm always watching from afar. So I've learned over the years how to use mirrors, and all the other stuff, so I can be able to keep my eye on them. If the haircut gets too far, the students and I have certain little, little cues or signals when I just take a clipper, fix the work for them. We try to make the client comfortable at all times. But yeah, we try to keep it strictly shop. That's why I don't try to stay on top of the clients while students and clients are working. So they could get a real shop experience. I either have background music playing, cuz I tell them I've gotta have some kind of background noise because that's what I'm used to in the shop. So we try to give them that real life barbershop experience while they're here.

EURE: Yeah, I was gonna ask you about that music, and when I was a young person, when I was in middle school, my uncle-

GRAHAM: You're already young, you're talking about when you were younger.

EURE: Much younger.

GRAHAM: Yeah, okay.

EURE: When my uncle had a barbershop, and so on Friday nights, that was my little hangout. I would go with him, and a lot of young people. It was a place where all generations were, from they're getting their first haircut, all the way up to the high school kids, and the college and the workers. And it was a lot of information shared in that space.

GRAHAM: Yeah, it is, it's amazing. So I had an opportunity to work for the North County Barber Board State inspector, so I used to inspect barbershops. And that was a very humbling experience because I thought at the time when I was inspecting, I was going on about 20 years of cutting hair in the barbershop. And I started meeting senior barbers that have been cutting for 30, 40 years, sometimes even more than that, it was just amazing to hear their stories. And the one thing that I found interesting that I got a chance now to finally, I just recently, actually, experienced going on to a third generation, meaning that I'm cutting one of my client's son's son. So that's like I'm reaching that third generation. And it's so amazing to hear the other older barbers doing the same thing.

EURE: Right, and when people get a barber, they like to keep the same one. People will wait for an hour.

Q&A: Diana Stevens has a question.

GRAHAM: I'm sorry.

Q&A: She wants to know, can we get a free haircut?

GRAHAM: I'm glad you said something. It is free for your very first time. For anybody that comes visit, it's free for their first time. And then our hair service is only $5, but we do reduce it for students and staff. So it'd be more like give them the senior rate, would be like $3, so senior and public safety rating.

EURE: And barbers do women's hair.

GRAHAM: We do women's hair. So now yeah, mainly when it comes to doing women's hair, because we already have three great cosmetology programs here at Wake Tech, we try to be careful on not stepping on anyone's toes. But if it's kind of any short cuts, like some ladies would call boy cuts, we do those. When it comes to longer layered cuts or styles, we just mainly do shampoo and a wash, a simple wash and a wrap, maybe a blow-dry style. But we don't really do a whole lot of styling, meaning we don't really do a lot of the chemical services. We learn it, and we learn it as barbers, but we don't actually offer that service because we don't wanna-

EURE: Right, compete within Wake Tech, but I've been to barbershops that they seem to be built within a beauty parlor. They're both together sometimes.

GRAHAM: Yeah, well, going back to our history, I mean, and that's just across the board of every shop. Back in the 60s, back when long hair was in,, we had the afro, we had the Beatles, hair was going long. So a lot of the barbers had to learn how to start doing women hair to be able to survive during that period. So and then there was going back to when I was inspecting, I used to run across a lot of older barbers who never came back to cut men. They were making so much money doing women's hair. So they just never really came back to barbering. But they still had their barber license because if you put our curriculum side by side, is basically what I try to explain to people. Barbering and cosmetology, we learn the same exact stuff. It's just that we spend more time on the hair cutting piece, while they spend more time on actually hair styling.

EURE: Now, you talked about your prices and the free. Now do you have a Thanksgiving special or anything, or have you thought about that?

GRAHAM: Yeah, that's a good one. I've been working on one called Thankful Giving. That was actually been one I was thinking, we do actually do a monthly special. Of course when we got this new class going to be starting, so we're gonna start ramping that back up. But we do like to send out the campus wide blast, so look for those. We'll be doing a blast every month with a different special. But yes, we will be doing. Now, I'm gonna go ahead and do this Thankful Giving one.

EURE: Right, I mean-

GRAHAM: And most of the time, I had to cut you off, I'm sorry. But most of them, when we do it, it's usually whatever that service be or advertisement would be free for that entire month.

EURE: Well, I think even as an outreach, that this is a season of giving, and people can bring the canned goods. I mean, you can do a lot of wonderful things at this space.

GRAHAM: Yeah, I was speaking with Ms. Melanie.

EURE: And I can’t remember her new last name. I know who you’re talking about.

GRAHAM: And we had talked about trying to mention about any time there's any other type of, like you said, kind of drive or donation, that we have the space here that we can always do any type of canned drives or any kind of-

EURE: I need to remember that, because I know that we are getting ready to do some Thanksgiving dinners for some of our students. And probably this is a site that they collect food too, isn't it?

GRAHAM: We can be, yeah, they do, public safety does do. We can do it as for the school as well, but we did a drive for actually on Wiseroad, we did a shoe drive here, we did it last year. And so, yeah, that's definitely.

EURE: Well-

Q&A: We have a question for you, one last question from Melanie Green. This is a tough question.

GRAHAM: Boy.

Q&A: This is one of those end of exam, end of semester questions.

GRAHAM: Boy.

Q&A: Okay, she's talking about conflict periods, a sociological theory that suggests that conflicts help move society forward in growth. Sometimes bad things happen, and they help us. Okay, so I'm sure she's probably talking maybe about the civil rights conflict and that period in American history when it helped us grow. And she wants to know how do you see barbershops as fitting into that particular period of history in the conflict amongst the civil rights era?

EURE: I don't think it's a hard question.

GRAHAM: No, it's not actually.

EURE: I mean, they're involved now. And I can remember even when they were fighting to make Martin Luther King's birthday a holiday and [INAUDIBLE] in South Africa. Barbershops are always a place, a go to place to discuss and from a community person's point of view. But as a barber, you might wanna answer that differently.

GRAHAM: Yeah, we actually kind of touched on that earlier when we mentioned about how, I was talking about the place where people would come and officers would come. But yeah, during that civil rights, that was an area, it was actually during that period, it was almost kinda like, I guess, you would consider almost like safe havens or safe spots for them to come meet and to be able to organize, to rally. Barbershops were used for that as well. Before the actual civil rights movement, back around, like I said, around that post Civil War time, one book I was reading, one research gentleman that did a research said. And his theory was that they believed that the barbershop, because during that post-Civil War era, the black barbers were the only ones cutting hair. Because any kind of a service industry was mainly for any type of slaves. And so they believed that the black barbers because their professionalism had some kind of influence on a lot of politicians to be able to feel comfortable with freeing the slaves.

EURE: It makes sense. And that even goes back to the SE Central cuz it's the service. I think that our time is winding down, and it was great. And I'm planning on coming back, this is gonna be my home base. We'll bring some people up in here, I love this space.

GRAHAM: Thank you, thank you.

EURE: And I think we need to promote this a lot more in the community. And if any of you are listening, please get in touch with Graham and try to have him come out. And it will showcase what you do, but it also will give you a really good added bump to your event.

GRAHAM: That's right, if the haircuts don't come to us, we'll go to the haircuts.

EURE: Exactly.

GRAHAM: Thank you.

EURE: Thank you for hosting this today.

GRAHAM: Thank you.

EURE: It's great.

GRAHAM: All right.