

Fulton Montgomery

REGIONAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

CENTENNIAL AWARD

Northville 5 & 10



The Northville 5 & 10 (Five and Dime) has stood the test of time for more than a century, but for owner Ashley VanAllen, its success has always come down to something simple: hard work, family, and an unwavering commitment to preserving the past while serving the present.

That legacy is now being recognized as the Fulton Montgomery Regional Chamber honors the historic shop with its Centennial Award—an acknowledgment of both longevity and lasting community impact.

Located at 122 South Main Street in Northville, the Northville 5 & 10 is widely regarded as the oldest continuously operating five-and-dime store in the United States. Founded in 1907 by Richard G. DeWitt, the business moved into its current home—the Willard Building—in 1914, a structure built specifically for the store just a few years earlier. More than a century later, many of its original features remain intact, from hardwood floors with star inlays and embedded coins to the nostalgic fudge counter and penny candy that continues to delight visitors of all ages.

Through decades of change, including mergers with J.J. Newberry in 1931 and later McCrory's in 1972, the store endured. When McCrory's began closing locations in 1997, the Northville store's future was uncertain—until local ownership stepped in to preserve it. That decision ensured the shop would remain a cornerstone of Main Street, eventually returning to its classic name and identity.

Today, VanAllen and her husband carry that legacy forward as third-generation owners. For VanAllen, the store is more than a business—it's a lifelong connection. She began working there at just 12 years old, learning the rhythms of retail and the importance of customer relationships early on. Now, her own children represent the fourth generation to be part of the store's story.

"I feel very lucky," she said, noting her daily two-and-a-half-minute walk to work from her Northville home.

Inside, the store is a carefully curated blend of past and present. The downstairs remains intentionally nostalgic, filled with penny candy—more than 250 varieties—classic toys, and the ever-popular homemade fudge, still made in-house using recipes passed down through generations. Upstairs, updates have been made to meet modern needs, but never at the expense of the store's historic charm.

"We refuse to lose any of the nostalgia," VanAllen said. "It's important for the store and for our customers."

That sense of nostalgia is palpable. Visitors can still spot cigar burns on the second-floor floors—remnants of an earlier era—and even signatures etched into exterior bricks, including one dated April 16, 1908. The store plays oldies music throughout the day, enhancing the feeling of stepping back in time.

But what truly sets the Northville 5 & 10 apart is its deep connection to the community. The business regularly donates to local booster clubs, concession stands, and organizations such as the Edinburg Little League and the Sacandaga Valley Arts Network. VanAllen takes particular joy in supporting events that celebrate history and tradition, like Elvis tribute shows, which remind her of her grandparents, Nelson and Louise, who once owned the store.

That community support is returned in kind. Loyal customers—many spanning generations—continue to shop there year after year. Some even call ahead during the busy summer season to have their favorite fudge boxed and ready. Others rely on staff to gather items for them or assist with shopping accessibility, reinforcing the store's reputation for personal service.

VanAllen credits her grandparents and mother for instilling the values that guide her today: a strong work ethic, fairness in pricing, and treating employees like family. Those principles are evident in everyday moments, like former employees stopping by to help unload deliveries or college students returning each summer to work.

Running a business of this scale is not without challenges. Staffing has been difficult at times, and balancing family life with the demands of ownership requires constant effort. Still, VanAllen remains committed, driven by a long-term goal of passing the store on to the next generation.

Her advice to other businesses is straightforward: "You have to put in the work. Nights, weekends—whatever it takes. And learn when to say no."

As the Northville 5 & 10 celebrates this milestone recognition, it stands as more than a retail store. It is a living piece of history, a gathering place, and a testament to the enduring power of family-owned business—one that continues to welcome customers not just as shoppers, but as part of its story.



From left: Employee Sabrina Flowers and owner Ashley VanAllen in front of fudge counter.

NORTHVILLE 5 & 10

122 S. Main Street, Northville | facebook.com/Northville5and10

Honorable Mention: Pickett Memorial Co., 158 E. Fulton Street, Gloversville