

THOMAS L. SULLIVAN

- o Owner of Sullivan's Toy Store,
3412 Wisconsin Ave. since 1954
- o 59 years old

Sullivan's Toy Store was formerly called Roger's Toy Store for about 5 or 6 years. Roger's Toy Stores was a loose confederation of stores, of which I was a member. They went out of business but I survived. And at that time I changed the name to Sullivan's Toy Store. This was the original of the Sullivan's Toy Stores.

When I surveyed the neighborhood in the summer of 1954 there was a small hardware store on Macomb Street in the block below the Zebra Room. I said to the owner who operated the store, "Where are the children?" He replied, "If you open a toy store up there on Wisconsin Avenue the kids will come out of the woodwork!" The many nice little children around Cleveland Park quickly found me when I started the business in the fall of 1954.

I used to know most everybody in Cleveland Park. I always enjoy talking to them. I could go to the Giant to buy groceries on the way home after closing, and many times I would see about fifteen to twenty people whom I knew. I must say that the special thing about Cleveland Park is the people who live here. What makes this store nice are the people who come in here.

In November of 1963 people came up from the White House to select supplies for John-John's birthday. But the party was never held, as I understand it, because President Kennedy was shot during the interim.

Ricky Houck, an astronaut who went into space last summer, used to be a stock boy in this store. He went to St. Albans. A reporter called me from Cape Kennedy to know if I remembered anything anecdotal about Ricky Houck. Ricky had told him he had worked at Sullivan's Toy Store. He was a wonderful boy.

The nationalities of the walking traffic at the confluence of Wisconsin Avenue and Newark (and Macomb) have changed. In the 1950's, English was spoken relatively exclusively--now Spanish reaches one's ears almost as much as English. Also, Far Eastern languages are often heard.