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## I LIKE IT HERE

by  
**GEORGE GRIM**



**EDITOR'S NOTE:** George Grim is out of the country on an assignment for the Minneapolis Tribune. During his absence, this column will be written by William Johnson, staff writer.

**YOU CRUISE ALONG** Dean Blvd. past giant trees shading the street, past magnificent apartment buildings and lush landscaped lawns.

As you approach Lake St., Lake Calhoun sparkles dead ahead, the stately Calhoun Beach hotel is at your left, across the street is a glistening insurance building and to your right is a flower shop made out of old storm windows and lumber covered with peeling paint.

Inside sits Leonard Bouchard, 47, bushy-browed and alert to serve anyone who wants to buy a dozen roses for a buck.

"I've been here 11 years," said Bouchard, perched on a stool before a stack of flower pails. "I started with a couple of storm windows, some lumber and a butcher's display case for my flowers. Every once in a while I've added something."

**THE ORIGINAL LEONARD'S FLOWER SHOP** was about 8 by 12 feet, he said. But more storm windows, a sign sawed up to make a wall and some more boards have expanded the establishment to about twice that size.

And how does he happen to be there—on one of the nicest bits of real estate in Minneapolis?

"Well I lease it for \$100 a month," he explained. "The property belongs to the estate of K. T. Wiedemann, the big gas and oil man who died last year. I may have to move if they decide to do something with the land, but I haven't heard yet. I understand they're asking \$189,000 for it."

Bouchard was asked why that pretty plot hasn't been used for another high-priced apartment building.

"Oh, it's all bog under here," he said. "This whole area used to be a marsh. Dean Blvd. was a creek. Most of this is fill in here and you'd have to put in too many pilings to hold up a big building."

**SO LEONARD'S FLOWER BUSINESS GOES ON**, but things could be better, he says.

"People drive too fast by here. Since they widened Lake St. and Dean Blvd., my business has dropped off. But I've got the only one of its kind in the area. No one attempts to do what I do.

"Mine is a place where a man who wants to spend a dollar to make his wife happy can stop his car, buy a dozen roses or something else and get on home without getting all involved. In most flower shops you stop in to buy a bouquet and, before you know it, you're in for five dollars."

How does he operate so inexpensively?

"Low overhead, of course," he said. "But I buy roses by the thousand. On a slow day I get in 500 roses. On Mother's day, for example, I'll sell seven, eight, maybe nine thousand."

He looked up at the sun streaming through a storm window in the ceiling. "Let's just say I run an impulse buying operation. And I love it," he said.

## Leonard Bouchard feature on his flower stand (22 July 1961)

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