

I began my career in hairstyling as the son of a barber. I grew up in barber shop in the 1970's, watching the skilled scissor work of the artisans. My father instilled in me an appreciation of the craft, and his passion and drive for continuing education in this ever-evolving profession.

As the unisex movement took hold, my father attended educational events and began cutting women's hair. Taking advantage of his barbering background, and viewing hair from the vantage point of cutting as opposed to styling, he followed the trail blazed by Vidal Sassoon, using scissors as a sculpting tool – cutting styles like the bob, and the iconic five-point which demonstrated the precision, architecture and structure that could be built into hair. I was hooked – I knew what I wanted to be when I grew up.

While still in cosmetology school, I became involved with the National Cosmetology Association, and began attending educational events. After earning my license in 1994, learning new techniques and perfecting ones that I already knew became my mission. Continual learning has been the key to my success during these first 20 years. I had the amazing experience of attending the Vidal Sassoon Academy in 1996 – and experienced the creativity, precision, and passion firsthand. It advanced my craft tremendously. Upon returning, my clients gradually recognized the change – not just in my work, but in my approach. I began tailoring my cuts to their facial shape and bone structure – and each client walked out of my chair with a truly unique style. I could see the difference in their face, and their stride – and I realized that we don't just cut hair, we change lives. Besides taking care of clients in the salon, I am also an educator. When I conduct an educational event, I always share a quote from another industry icon that has become my mantra – “I am a hairdresser. I cosmetically and psychologically transform self-images and destinies of fellow human beings.”

Vidal put women in control of their hairstyle – he literally put it in their hands. They now had the freedom to change styles – and to make the styles their own. His collaboration with designers took hair and elevated it from simply being an accessory to being an integral part of the total look – validating the fact that hair is just as important as the clothes, and sometimes even more so. I am inspired by his creativity, to envision a different way of doing hair; by his craftsmanship, to execute the styles with precise beauty; and his courage and determination to bring this new approach to the women of the world.

Vidal made strides in advancing the image of hairdressing as a profession, and not simply a “trade”. He personified the idea that the best thing we can do with our knowledge and success is to share it. The more talented, creative, skilled, and passionate hairstylists there are the better off we will be as an industry – and the more lives we can change.