



Solomon Amon (front) thinks Pike Place Market can survive for another 100 years.

THE REEL DEAL

Solomon Amon's eyes light up when he talks about Pike Place Market's 100th anniversary. "The market is an important part of Seattle," says the owner of Pure Food Fish Market, who turns 78 in July. "It's just as important as a library or a hospital. It's part of living here. I don't see why it can't survive for another 100 years."

As the market's longest tenured vendor, Amon knows a thing or two about succeeding over the long haul. Last year, he celebrated the 50th anniversary of the business he founded with his father, Jack, and he has no immediate plans to retire.

"The market is happening," he explains. "It's a fun place to shop, and it's a fun place to work."

Jack Amon, a Turkish immigrant, began selling fish at Pike Place Market in 1911. Solomon began working at the market full-time after he graduated from Seattle's Garfield High School in 1947. The two opened Pure Foods nearly a decade later, and the business has grown into one of the cornerstones of the market.

In the old days, Amon began his workdays before sunrise by selecting fish from the seafood-processing

houses along the downtown waterfront. The fish houses moved away in the 1970s, and these days, Amon places his orders by computer. Improved shipping technology allows him to carry seafood from around the world. Meanwhile, the Pure Foods Web site (www.freshseafood.com) allows customers anywhere in the country to have orders shipped to them overnight.

Amid these and other changes in the seafood industry, many of the best things about Pure Foods are those that remain unchanged. Amon estimates that 80 percent of his inventory still comes from local waters, and salmon, halibut, crab and shrimp remain as popular as ever. His employees may not possess as much flair as their fish-throwing colleagues up the hall at the Pike Place Fish Co., but they are a dedicated and enthusiastic bunch.

Then there is the straightforward business philosophy that reflects the values of a man who lives on Mercer Island with his wife of 54 years, Tillie, and keeps in close contact with his two daughters and five grandchildren, who all live in the Seattle area. Amon sums up the Pure Foods approach in simple terms: "We keep the fish fresh and treat the customers with respect." 

MARKET FRENZY

The 100th anniversary celebration at Pike Place Market includes these events:

- Aug. 10: PIKE PLACE MARKET CENTENNIAL BERRY BASH**
 - Aug. 10: SUNSET SUPPER**
 - Aug. 10-16: PIKE PLACE MARKET CENTENNIAL DAYS**
 - Aug. 17: 100TH BIRTHDAY Party**
- Guided tours, cooking demonstrations, live music, fireworks and more.
- For more information, call the market at (206) 682-7453, or visit the Web site: www.pikeplacemarket.org.

1973: The Pike Place Market Preservation & Development Authority (PDA) is created to manage the property.

1982: The Market Foundation is established to support a clinic, senior center, food bank and other services.

1989: The Urban Group, a New York-based investment partnership, attempts to oust the PDA.

1991: The Citizens Alliance to Keep Pike Place Market Public, headed by Victor Steinbrueck's son, Peter, reaches

a settlement with the Urban Group that keeps the PDA intact.

1987: Howard Schultz buys Starbucks.

1994: Actor Tom Skerritt and partners open The Alibi Room. (New owners acquire the restaurant in 2006.)

Sept. 18, 1996: During his re-election bid, President Bill Clinton addresses a crowd at Victor Steinbrueck Park, at the north end of the market. His entourage orders a pastry from Piroshky-Piroshky the next morning.