

## Goerings posts its obit, as customers say goodbye



Erica Brough/ Staff photographer

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Sara Watson browses the bare shelves at Goerings Book Store days before it finally closes, Tuesday, February 2, 2010 in Gainesville, Fla.

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Published: Wednesday, February 3, 2010 at 11:41 a.m.

Last Modified: Wednesday, February 3, 2010 at 11:41 a.m.

Goerings Book Store co-owner Tom Rider has posted an obituary for the store on its Web site explaining the many market forces that conspired to close one of the few remaining independent book stores in Gainesville.

But the most heartfelt eulogies come from those who will most feel what is being lost: A "dozen lifetimes" of knowledge about books. Personalized recommendations from staff who have learned a customer's tastes and interests over time. A friend who hosted events for and stocked books from debut writers, local authors and the university press. A key part of a university city's intellectual life.

Goerings is trying to clear the shelves with a 50 percent off sale through Sunday and is offering wine and cheese to "celebrate" nearly 39 years in business. They are also trying to sell the shelves, as well as desks, file cabinets, furniture and office supplies.

While business has dwindled, Rider said probably thousands of people are upset by their closing. He's heard from many since announcing in December that they would be shutting down this month.

"Most people would agree, at least until the last few years, a community such as Gainesville ought to be able to support a serious independent bookstore," he said.

But not even in a university town could the store overcome the combined assault from Internet sales, big-box chain stores, the recession and what Rider said proved to be a bad location despite being just one block from campus on Northwest First Avenue. He also blamed a new state law combined with a UF policy that made it harder to compete for UF textbook sales in recent years.

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- [1](#)
- [2](#)
- [3](#)
- [Next Page](#)

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