

Interview: Starbucks co-founder talks about early days

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Gordon Bowker tires of telling the story about how Starbucks - the coffee store and the name - was his idea. Besides not wanting to take all the credit, Bowker has moved on.

After co-founding Starbucks, he co-launched Redhook Ale Brewery and pushed David Brewster to start Seattle Weekly - investing in and freelancing for the tab. He served on the board of Childhaven, a nonprofit that cares for neglected and abused children, and renamed it. Bowker's best friend remains Jerry Baldwin, a college roommate and another Starbucks co-founder.

Both sit on the board of Peet's Coffee & Tea, a company they bought 24 years ago and which is now publicly traded. Bowker will retire from Peet's board on May 21.

When Bowker agreed to an interview last month, he chose the Peet's store in Fremont as the venue. In a balcony overlooking the noisy coffee bar, Bowker, 65, spoke slowly and in a soft, resonant voice about his life, his businesses and why he agreed to talk about himself.

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