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Journal Bob Haughton, 86, of Flushing Township stands in the lobby of the Durant Hotel in Flint where he was a bellhop 70 years ago. "I thought this was like working in Chicago," Haughton said of his after school job in 1941. "I enjoyed it and I met some important people. I even met [Detroit] Tigers pitcher Elden Auker."

**FLUSHING TOWNSHIP, Michigan** — Bob Haughton remembers the Durant from its glory years.

Dressed in a brown and tan uniform decorated with a brown bow tie, Haughton, 86, of Flushing Township spent a lot of time at the Durant Hotel 70 years ago as one of its proud bellhops.

He recently found a portrait of himself taken in 1941 dressed in his uniform, wearing a sly smile and dark hair.

"I look about the same now. The hair's a little different," laughed Haughton, now with white and gray hair.

To share his memories, Haughton offered to have Flint's newly renovated **Durant**, 607 E. Second Ave., display the portrait inside the building.

Alaina Simoni, Durant's property and resident manager, said having the photo would bring a little piece of history back to the establishment.

"To have that piece of history would be great. It's just nostalgic," she said. "It's nice to see that he's willing to bring back that history."

Built in the 1920s, the eight-story building was named for William C. Durant, the founder of General Motors. The building, originally known as the Durant Hotel, closed in 1973 and sat vacant for nearly four decades until developers began **demolition and renovation in 2008**.

The Durant, which **opened its doors again in September**, now serves as office space and houses 93 apartments.

Haughton, who worked as a bellhop from 1940 to 1943 until entering the United States Air Force, walked into the Durant for the first time a few weeks ago.

There was no front check-in counter like he remembered and the elevators were in different places, he said, but it looked marvelous.



[View full size](#) Emily-Rose Bennett | The Flint Journal Bob Haughton, 86, of Flushing Township stands next to a photo that was taken of him in 1941 when he was 16 years old and a bellhop at the Durant Hotel in downtown Flint. "I don't even recall that photo being made," Haughton said. "I look very confident."

"It's so beautiful now," Haughton said of the building, which drew celebrities to it during its early years. "I was quite happy when they were going to do something (with the building). I didn't think it would turn out like it did."

The details of where the 8 inch by 10 inch portrait of Haughton will be displayed is still uncertain, Simoni said, but hopefully details will be ironed out in the next couple of weeks.

With old pictures already in the Durant of how the building used to look, the picture of Haughton as a teenage bellhop would be a nice addition, she said.

It brings the age of the building to reality, Simoni said.

"The building's been there, been sitting for so long," she said. "If those walls could talk."