

just loved it

LONG-TIME REGISTRAR RETIRES

With nearly 40 years of committed service to the Defiance College community, Beverly Harrington retires



By Michele Tinker, Director of Annual Giving

“I was meant to work in higher education. I just loved it,” says Registrar Emeritus Beverly Harrington, who retired from Defiance College in May after completing just short of 40 years of service.

Bev was newly graduated from Bowling Green State University in 1970, when she drove by Defiance College on her way to a job interview. She thought she might enjoy working in an academic environment, so after her interview, she stopped by campus. She met with the Dean of Academic affairs, Dr. Alton Kurtz, who liked her and hired her immediately as his secretary.

That was the start of her successful career, which took place entirely at Defiance College. Dr. Tim Rickabaugh, Interim Vice President for Academic Affairs and Academic Dean, noted how rare it is for an entire professional career to be served within one institution. “DC will not be the same without Bev Harrington’s presence,” he said.

From secretary, Bev moved to financial aid, to the advising center for freshmen, to assistant registrar. In 1977 she was appointed registrar, which turned out to be her true niche. In a college the size of Defiance, the registrar is responsible for the academic records, scheduling students for classes and preparing the course schedule. That includes anything that is a supplement to the students taking classes – assigning advisors, certifying athletic eligibility, evaluating students as they progress towards their degrees and assuring they’ve completed the requirements for graduation. Bev also did the statistical demographic information for Defiance College.

What was Bev’s secret to this long and successful career? “I’ve always been a person in my job that looks to help people. If someone will benefit from me taking an extra

look, I'll do that," Bev explained. "The focus is not just on the work that comprises the job, but how I can help, whether it's faculty or students."

"It was the philosophy of my office that if someone asks for information, we got it to them as soon as possible; that became a priority. I did not make them wait because I was busy. I think people have always appreciated that."

"I always liked to interact with students; it was fun to talk with them, especially those from places I'd never been," Bev added. She is still in contact with students she met throughout her many years as registrar. Bev has been an avid Yellow Jackets fan, which also helped her connect with the students. Football and basketball are her favorites sports, and one of her greatest experiences was serving as honorary coach at a football game, getting to be right down with the players and coaches, and in the locker room at half-time. "I learned I loved being down on the sidelines," Bev said with a smile.

When she became registrar, all work was done by hand, and students scheduled their classes in the arena-style registration at the gym. One of the greatest challenges of her position was the vast amount of paper stored, and she implemented a retention policy to get control of it. She also compiled historical

statistical information and started producing enrollment, retention and comparison reports.

In 1980, DC implemented a computer system. "No one had any experience working on a computer in 1980 – that was really something," she remembers. Once the system was installed, she received a two-hour training and was handed a manual. "I told myself if it is in the manual, I will find it and I will learn it." As a result, she became one of the most skilled users of DC's campus-wide system.

A big change Bev has seen with the college over the years is the appearance of the campus, with Enders, Sisson, Trowbridge and the music building making way for Schauffler Hall, Serrick Campus Center, and Pilgrim Library.

Rickabaugh related how deeply Bev will be missed. "Over my time at Defiance College, and even since I first entered the educational profession, I have never worked with a more organized and dedicated professional. Additionally, I learned from Bev that it is of vital importance to keep the institutional mission at the forefront during the decision-making process."

Added Rickabaugh, "On a personal side, I will miss her ability to practically read my mind when I wasn't sure what

I really wanted to ask. She fully understood the academic curriculum, its historical progression, and the overall functions of the academic affairs process."

While Bev leaves large shoes to fill, she has had the opportunity to work closely with her replacement, who is well-known to DC and many of its alumni. Mariah O'Shea Orzolek '02 is not only an alumna herself, but moves to the registrar's position from Student Life, where she has served as Director of Residence Life for several years. Mariah and Bev worked together for the six months prior to Bev's departure to assure a comfortable transition in this important office.

Bev is a lifelong resident of Bryan, Ohio who has always enjoyed being physically active. She swims regularly year-round and loves to bike and fish. She has traveled all over the U.S. and is especially fond of Virginia and West Virginia.

Of course, everyone who knows Bev knows how important music is to her life. She has played the piano since the age of five.

"I always liked to interact with students; it was fun to talk with them, especially those from places I'd never been."

-- Beverly Harrington,
Retired DC Registrar



Her father tuned and sold pianos, and it was her job to demonstrate the pianos by performing for the customers who came to Harrington Piano Service.

She has plans for a busy retirement that include gardening, swimming, and getting together with friends who are retired. "I look at retirement as a time to do those things that I'd cut back because of my job." She admits that she finds herself "involved in things" such as being recruited to the committees of her high school and college reunions.

About her time at Defiance, she is typically modest. "I was fortunate to work with academic deans that I liked, and the presidents – the top people at the college were great. It's been a great job. I don't think I could have been placed in a better job. Little did I know when I stopped here..." ♦