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51!

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Wednesday April 24, 2019

51!

By Eric F. Spina

When Mary Ann Issenmann retires this spring from the registrar's office after an astounding 51 years of service (that is not a typo: FIFTY ONE!), the University of Dayton will lose one of the most dedicated people ever to grace our campus.

Always self-effacing, Mary Ann personifies in a quiet way the Marianist spirit of hospitality, service — and selflessness. Her colleagues simply love her, and all who cross her path are grateful to share that journey.

"She is one of the warmest, kindest, most empathetic people I know," says Maria Newland, associate registrar. "Mary Ann's brain is like a vault — crammed full of institutional knowledge that she is always willing to share with anyone who needs her help. She never hesitates to answer a call for assistance, always putting her own tasks aside to help."

Two months shy of her 18th birthday she started her career as a keypunch operator in the registrar's office in St. Mary's Hall and will wrap it up on May 3 in the same building after working her way up to assistant to the registrar. Over the years, she's used a variety of computer input methods, learned a slew of software programs, handled transcripts, distributed caps and gowns, processed financial aid applications, created student ID cards — and more.

In all, she's worked for five registrars, including a two-decade stint with Tom Westendorf, who called her "the ideal employee." Current registrar Jennifer Creech describes her as a "troubleshooter" and a "jack-of-all-trades" with everything related to the Banner student database system.

"We have been receiving warm welcomes and friendly conversation with Mary Ann for almost 51 years," says Jennifer. "Our team is forever grateful for her dedication and commitment. She is one in a million."

And she *is* in a class of her own. While a handful of faculty have logged more than half a century of service before retiring, only her name pops up in a quick search of staff who have done the same.

Like many of our students, Mary Ann says she has made friends for life at UD, where, as a 40-year season ticketholder, she will continue to cheer on her beloved Flyers from row D in section 310. She says that she might occasionally walk the two miles to campus from her Belmont home to visit colleagues and one of her two beloved nieces, who is starting mechanical engineering classes in the fall. She'll sit quietly in the chapel, her favorite spot on a campus that has grown leaps and bounds during her tenure. Then she'll catch a ride home with her sister, Jeanne, a senior administrative assistant in the School of Engineering's co-op office.

What kept her in the registrar's office for five-plus decades? "Working together and supporting each other, we became a family," she says simply.

This will always be your home, Mary Ann. On behalf of a grateful university, I thank you for your caring presence on our campus and your dedicated service. You are in a class of your own.