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Career on Campus

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As the administrative associate in the office of the Alumni Chair in the Humanities prepared to retire this week, she marveled at the transformation of the University in the 49 years she's spent here.

Since first reporting to work in the office of Brother Leonard Mann, S.M., in the College of Arts and Sciences two weeks after her graduation from Miamisburg High School in 1960, Carolyn Ludwig has watched two full generations of students and the start of a third earn their degrees from UD.

A staff member in athletics from 1964 to 1973, she was on hand at Madison Square Garden for the Flyers' two National Invitation Tournament titles in 1962 and 1968. She was there when the late athletics director Tom Frericks declared, "We need a bigger place to play basketball," and she watched as he traveled to the best arenas in the country to inform the design of a building still heralded as a top venue for college basketball.

"When we completed UD Arena, it was the best in the country at the time, and now 40 years later, it's still one of the best," Ludwig said.

She's also witnessed waves of capital expansion that have brought forth Kennedy Union, Kettering Laboratories, Roesch Library, two recreation centers, a new home for the School of Law, the Humanities Building and more than a dozen residence halls and apartment buildings.

"I like to say that the first 10 years I was here, there was always a hole in the ground, a new building going up," Ludwig said. "When Marycrest was being built, I remember Mary Tuite in admissions and her 'Marys for Mary' project, where anyone with the name Mary could put in $5 to support the chapel in Marycrest."

Ludwig's affection for the University and her colleagues over the years runs deep, particularly for her first supervisor.

"Brother Mann was the epitome of an S.M.-er," Ludwig said of the late Marianist dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. When Ludwig's father died suddenly of a heart attack, "the first person to show up at the front door was Brother Mann," she said. "He stayed and comforted my mother for hours."

Ludwig never forgot Mann's kindness. When Dean Paul Benson talked to Ludwig about a farewell event in the Torch Lounge, she asked Benson to put the money he would have spent on the reception into the scholarship fund named for Mann.

People at UD seem to have that same respect and affection for Ludwig, said John Heitmann, history professor and the Alumni Chair in the Humanities for the past four years.

Ludwig has left a legacy of proficiency, generosity and kindness such that wherever she's worked within the University, she's been asked to stay, Heitmann said. In fact, when English professor Gene August, the first Alumni Chair, set up shop in the Humanities Building in 1993, the dean of the College asked Ludwig to help August out for "six weeks, maximum," Ludwig said. August asked her to stay, and with the College dean's blessing, she did — for 16 years.

As philosophy professor Patricia Johnson began preparing to take office in August as the new Alumni Chair, she asked Ludwig to stay on part time for a few months until she can hire someone new. Naturally, Ludwig said, "Yes."

In due time, UD will be able to fill the position, but not the shoes.