

Jo Bailey Retires

Although Weeks Hall is usually pretty quiet during the semester break, there was the sound of many voices and a lot of laughter in and around the Cline Lounge on January 5, 2001. The occasion was a potluck lunch in honor of Jo H. Bailey who was retiring from her position as head of the office staff. Jo had established a monthly potluck lunch, and it seemed fitting to hold one for her during her last day on the job. The food was great, and there was standing room only both in the lounge and the surrounding hallways. Scores of departmental students, alums, faculty, and staff were there, and friends from other departments and the college joined them. We were delighted to meet Jo's own family as well as revisit her former colleagues: Ann Bauhs, Ruth Dresser, and Donna McDermott. Those who could not attend sent greetings.

Jo joined the department during the summer of 1969 when we were still housed in Science Hall. She was then Joan H. Hoffman, and she started out as an Accounts Examiner I. Those who go back that far may remember that the office staff was then housed in room 40 in the basement of Science Hall. Office Head Joan Smith and Edith Fosbinder had an inner office in room 40A, and Jo was given a desk there as well. A number of the male graduate students used to find reasons to talk with Joan Smith so that they could take a peek at the attractive new young bookkeeper.

As the years went by, Jo moved steadily up the ladder as her job description changed to Fiscal Clerk, Account Specialist, and then Financial Specialist. In 1990 she married Bert Bailey, and we got used to thinking of her as Jo Bailey. And during this time her five children (four boys and one girl) grew up and had families of their own. Today Jo has thirteen grandchildren, all of whom live in the local area between Stoughton and Portage.

When Joan Smith died in 1993, Jo Bailey was chosen to fill her position as Program Assistant



photo: Mary Diman

Jo Hoffman Bailey retired in January (2001) after 32 years with the department. We'll all miss her.

Supervisor. Her door was always open, and one rarely passed by without finding her helping others. She continued Joan Smith's practice of keeping a dish stocked with candy—as if we needed an excuse to drop by; few of us realized that it was Jo Bailey and Bill Unger's own money that kept the dish filled.

Anyone who deals with faculty and students soon realizes that neither group remembers anything that they are told about rules, regulations, deadlines, or payroll matters. We were all amazed that Jo could be so patient in explaining matters that we both knew had been explained many times before. During the retirement potluck the present and former chairs offered token gifts and comments about their memories of Jo Bailey. Without exception those memories were of Jo's friendly helpfulness and her delightful sense of humor. Jo was very proud of her staff.

So let us toast Jo Bailey. We wish her well in an active retirement; she is already committed to volunteer duties at a local hospital. We are a better department because of her. But her loss to us produces an ache of the heart that will be a long time healing.

Louis J. Maher



photos: Carl Bowser



Wishing Jo a happy retirement are department chair, Mary Anderson, far left, and, right (left to right), Adrienne Cameron, Ruth Dresser and Ann Bauhs. In the back is Jo's daughter-in-law, Diana Hoffman.