

Wren cancels postal job

By BARBARA UNDERWOOD

When Clarence Wren says "there are no better people than those who go in and out of the post office every day," he isn't talking about the customers but about his fellow workers.

"I have never run across one yet who didn't come in to do the job he or she was hired to do," the recently-retired Wren said last week after 31 years in the postal business.

The last 20 of those years were in the Birmingham Post Office.

Wren has no complaints about the customers, either. He has never been a carrier in Birmingham, but has had many contacts with customers in his job as a clerk behind the windows and as foreman.

Contact with customers was the most enjoyable part of his career. Wren said.

"I have run into some who have come in with a hot temper, but once they understand the situation they leave with a happy smile."

HE HAS never regretted that he chose the postal service as a career.

"I worked for the New York Central Railroad through one winter and it was too cold and too hard," he said. "I heard there was an opening at the post office and I applied and got the job."

That was in Harrisburg, Ill., in 1946. He started as a carrier there. In 1956 he brought his family to the Pontiac area and was at the post office in Pontiac for one year before coming to Birmingham as a clerk in 1956.

When the United States Post Office changed to the postal service a few years ago, things became much more mechanized, Wren said.

"We used to do everything by hand," he explained. "We still do in Birmingham, basically, but we do have conveyors."

WREN RECALLED that the basement of the present post office building was completely empty when he started working there and now it is full. Also, the operation is carried out in three separate buildings now.

"It's no great problem, the people can handle it," he said, but it has drawbacks.

His wish for the postal service in Birmingham is a new building.

"I would like to see all the employees under one roof where they would be more compatible and understand each other's functions better so there is not animosity between the carriers and clerks."

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Southfield court system expands

(Editor's note: S. James Clarkson is chief judge of Southfield's 46th District Court and former mayor of the city. In the following guest article, written at the request of the Southfield Executive, Clarkson offers some good news and some bad news about the judicial system.)

By JUDGE S. JAMES CLARKSON

This year the 46th District Court will continue and expand programs of improved services to the residents of the jurisdiction begun during 1977.

The past year has seen the establishment of programs and procedures designed to improve citizen access to the judicial system. Because these improvements have had a degree of success in their early months, there is reason to expect that in 1978 the 46th District Court will provide the highest level of service to citizens in its nine-year history.

The establishment of the office of the Magistrate by the Court, with the concurrence of the Southfield City Council, has resulted in more effective utilization of the court's three district judges. As a direct consequence of this time availability, the district judges have reduced the time from filing date to trial to an average of one year in civil matters. This improvement also extends to the court's traffic call where the time from the issuance of the citation to the trial of contested matters has been reduced from an average of 90 days in 1977 to 45 days in 1977.

IN THE SERVICES area, greater emphasis has been placed on appropriate staffing in the personal services area of the court. For example, clerical support for the court's probation division has been increased 33 percent. Plans are being made to implement a job placement program to return persons convicted of minor offenses to a productive status in society. Additionally, the court is reevaluating and redesigning its entire commitment to computerization with an eye to even greater improvement in scheduling efficiency.

Unfortunately, with the good news there is always some bad. For example, 326 persons were incarcerated in 1975. This dropped in 1976 to 190; but in 1977, 343 persons were sent to jail. The average monthly county jail population for 1977 amounted to 22.6 persons. The reason for this increase has not yet been determined, but I would speculate that it has to do with the increase in shoplifting cases with the district and the judges generally sending second offenders to jail.

LAST YEAR, as chief judge for the 46th District Court, I was assigned by the Michigan Supreme Court to sit as a Wayne County Circuit Court Judge for the month of June. The purpose of the assignment was to help alleviate the tremendous backlog of cases in the Wayne County Circuit Court.

Most of the cases I handled were not of the same type conducted in the 46th District Court. For example, divorce cases, and the balance of the others were divided between paternity actions and driver restoration hearings. I am satisfied that these cases could be handled by either a family court or by the district court with greater convenience and personal attention for the citizens and children involved.

I also spent several days in the Detroit Recorder's Court conducting examinations. The Recorder's Court for the city of Detroit handles only criminal cases and they, too, are very heavily backlogged. This experience helped me appreciate my own district and I was only too glad to return to a family full of trouble. But I now realize, comparatively speaking, that it is a great place in which to live and work.

In summary, then, the new year can be expected to bring continued efforts on the part of the judges and staff of the 46th District Court to provide greater services to residents of all areas of the jurisdiction at the lowest possible costs to the taxpayers.

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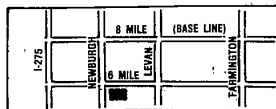
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