

Senior with seniority: 84-year-old to get diploma

BY TAYLOR LINCOLN
STAFF WRITER

Sybil Breen might take a while to do things, but she gets the job done. On June 5, she will graduate from Clarenceville High — 66 years after completing her junior year in high school.

She has been a participant in Clarenceville's senior services program, in which the district conducts classes in senior citizen centers, since the fall of 1987.

Breen recently passed Clarenceville's competency exam, which is required of all of Clarenceville's

graduates, and will soon complete the last classes she needs to fulfill her curriculum requirements. Clarenceville includes northeast Livonia, northwest Redford and southeast Farmington Hills.

"I wanted to do it really for my boys, they're both going to come to graduation," said Breen, an 84-year-old mother of two sons, who lives in Livonia's Ziegler Center.

Although she did not attend classes at Clarenceville, she will participate in the regular graduation ceremony. "It's a wonderful thing," said Rose Govig, adult education.



PAUL HIRSCHMAN/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Earns diploma: Sybil Breen, at age 84, has earned a diploma from Clarenceville High.

Senior citizens, said Govig, "get to walk across the stage, get to wear a cap and gown, and probably receive a great deal of applause."

Breen's high school career was postponed in 1926, just after she finished her junior year. She and three of her nine sisters moved from southern Illinois to Detroit to care for her brother, who had suffered a hand injury. They were soon joined by their parents.

"When you get out and start working, you sort of forget about school. I went down to register a couple of times, but I didn't go through with it," Breen said.

For Breen, a high school diploma will act as a tangible symbol of her education, though it was not her objective in taking classes. "It was just that I wanted to take classes. I hadn't really thought about finishing but Rose Govig got after me to finish up."

"It's so necessary now, so many people have gone back to school. They've had to go back to be able to get a job."

Aside from working toward her degree, Breen has participated in a

community cable TV program in which resident of all ages produce local television shows.

Although Breen is 84, she still has a practical use for her degree. She's a planner manager for Clarenceville who has seen several senior citizens get their diplomas.

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