44-year career puts teacher in class by herself

40

Bit Arium to contour Stary Warts. Once in awhile Priecille Symes has to catch heraelf. She alips into the present tense like noth-ing has changed. But it has. Symes was a teacher for more than 44 years before relifing from Eagle Elementary in the Farmington District in January, Despite what the retirement check says, a teacher is always a teacher.

check says, a teacher is always a teacher. "I always wanted to be a teacher." Symes said. "I always played school, and I chose the right profession. I never regretted a day of it." Today, the only regret the 66-year-oid Farmington Hills resi-tient has is she's no longer at the head of a classroom. Hilp and knee replacement sur-ger, the result of an ongoing hattle with osteoarthritis, be-came too much to bear.

initie with esteentritis, be-came too much to bear. With little lanfare, Symes de-clided to step down. The decision was difficult. Not able to face the children, Symes went home crying the Fri-day before Christmas vacation. Engle principal Susan Johnson broke the news instead. Symes holds the distinction of being the longest-serving educa-tor in the Farmington Public Schools.

Schools. She started in 1949 — fresh out of the University of Detroit — ns a third-grade teacher at 10 Mile School.

Mite Scholt, Bymes went on to work at Bond Schol for five years before settling in at Eagle in 1955. During that time, Symes watched as the district experi-enced the same rate of growth as the kida themselves. The school was in a rural area. Then, it wasn't uncommon for a parent to seen a lang a bushel of tomatoes or a homemade loaf of

bread with their school-bound child. When she started, there was also no principal. Instead, the head teacher was paid an extra \$10 to handle the administrative tasks. Central office consisted of a superintendent and his secre-tary.

tary. The classroom size ranged anywhere from 40-45 pupils. A pre-Michigan Education Associ-ation teacher's solary was \$2,400

ation teacher's salary was \$2,400 for 40 weeks work. More than 44 years on the job gives her a sense of history. Symas is one of the few who can match the face with the schools they're named after such as for-mer superintendents 0.5 Dunckel and Gerald Harrison. Such a lengthy career gives her a perspective on how education has changed. She remembers the time be-fore the turbulent 1960s and '70s when it was common to tell en

She remembers the time be-fore the turbulent 1960s and '05 when It was common to tell an unprocomed sith-grader to tuck in his shirt. "You wouldn't dare do that to-day," she said. She learned not to become frazzled when new-wave tech-inques came along such as whole language and new math. Parents and students were less likely to question a teacher's au-thority then. That's not so to day. "It really upsets me when I hear all this teacher bashing; It's so unfair," she said. "When you read those letters sent to the newspaper letter box and all you year. They don't sec three of four of us setting out in the parking lot at 6 o'clock in the moming because they can't wait to get in." Most of all, lengthy service in

in." Most of all, lengthy service in one position leaves indelible memories. Symes cherishes them, holding onto them like

C. Maria gems bestowed only on her. Of nearly an estimated 1,500 students she's taught, Symes re-calls two in particular. Doug Dalglish and Bill Osgood used to bring her sandwiches when she busy taking care of her husband suffering with cancer. "I've never forgotten those toys," she said. Her and her husband, Robert, who died in 1991, also used to have children from Sarah Fisher Home stay with them during weekends.

Then there were the countless children who stopped by her house after school. They'd listen to music on the radio and drink pop, well before TV would im-prison their imaginations.

Many have come back to visit, including one recently who is now a doctor in Millord. Symes promised the fifth-graders abe'd return to see them graduate to middle school. She misses them. "I guess I always loved chil-

played school, and I chose the right profes-

Priscilla Symes



Man charged in S'fld rapes also suspect in Hills case Franklin Road near 12 Mile where she was working shortly before 10:30 p.m. As she stood in the hallway locking the door to her office, her attacker came up behind her car-rying what she thought was a gun and forced her back into the off-ice. He covered her eyes with an undiclosed material.

BY ALICE COLLINS STAFF WRITER

The prime suspect in the as-soult of a therapist in a Farming-ton Hills office building in June has been charged with two rapes and robberies in Southfield.

The incidents of rape and rob-bery of women working late in Southfield office buildings oc-curred more than a year apart.

curred more than a year apart. Rodney Paul Hernandez, 39, of Harrison Township, is being held on bonds totaling more than \$2 million after being arraigned in 46th District Court Thursday on rape charges. The incidents took place Dec. 12, 1992, and Jan. 4 of this year. Hernandez also is being inves-tigated in connection with a simi-lar incident that occurred on June 10, 1993, in Southfield, said Southfield police spokesman LA. Moore.

10, 1955, in 1955,

Listed below are some of the Farmington-area police incidents, fire calls and court cases report-ed during the past week.

THEFT

THEFT Two men who claimed to be city and county water inspectors stole \$800 from a resident on Nine Mile In Farmington Hills Feb. 15. One man is described as about 28, wearing a Detroit Tigrer haseball cap and a gray sweat abirt. One of the men showed a gold badge. The other was described as 30-35, wearing dark clokhing, a dark baseball cap and medium-colored panta and jacket. After the first man asked to ase the water meter in the basement, the owner took him downstairs. The second man then appeared, and the owner took ask the men to leave. He then dis-covered the meney missing from a drawer.

Hubcaps worth \$600 were stolen from the Kmart on Orchard Lake in Farmington Hills Feb. 15.

police detectives. Assisting in the arrest were the Michigan State Police Narcotics Enforcement Team and a Detroit Police Repeat Offenders Unit.

Team and a Detroit Police Repeat Offenders Unit. Hernanders Unit. Hernandez is a prime suspect in the June 22, 1993, incident in Parmington Hills because of skit mask and the way the crimes were committed in all four cases, and detective Sgt. Doug Ander-sen of the Farmington Hills po-characteristic Sgt. Doug Ander-sen of the Farmington Hills po-the Hills case, the barged in the Hills case, the attacker stalked a therapist at the profes-sional buildings on Orchard Lake just south of 13 Mile, grabbed her and struggted with her. The wom-and struggted with her. The wom-coming toward her office. Hernandez was charged with sexual conduct and unarmed rob-sery in the 1994 Incident. We guilty pleas were entered for Hernandez at the arraigment. The date for a preliminary ease in the cases will be set during a court conference Wednesday. In the same will be set during a condition of the policies and there are leave the office building at 28336

A three-quarter length leather coat with a "V" stitched into the back was stolen from a doctor's office on 12 Mile Feb. 14. An \$800 NEC portable phone was stolen from Alfoccino's res-taurant on Grand River in Farm-ington Hills Feb. 16.

wood in Farmington Hills Feb. 16-17 causings total of \$3,650 in damage. All the glass and plastic was broken and the roof was dent-ed on a blue 1981 Lincoln and a white 1985 Ford F-150 pickup causing \$2,000 and \$1,800 in damage respectively. The driver's window of a green 1987 Chevy van was broken causing \$150 in dam-are.

All of the glass and both rear-view mirrors were broken on a 1977 gold Cadillac parked on North Industrial in Farmington Hills Feb. 16-17 causing \$1,000 in

POLICE/FIRE CALLS

IL VANDALISM

BASEAULT A 31-year-old Farmington Hills woman aski the 33-year-old wom-an ahe is living with began hitting her during an argument and a man then dragged her by the hair et an Eastlidd residence in Farm-ington Hills Feb. 16. A black 1992 Ford Mustang GT convertible worth \$20,000 was

The victim quoted the assailant as saying, "I won't hurt you," be-fore the sexual assault. He took her necklace and two rings before leaving.

In the 1992 case, a Bloomfield Hills woman, also 44 years old, was raped and robbed by a man shorty after 8 p.m. as she pre-pared to leave her office in the Riversedge office complex, 27600 Northwestern Highway. The victim told police her as-sailant pushed her back into her door. She screamed and the man hit her in the face, police reported at the time. The man sexually as-saulted her, stole her purse and fied. The June 1, 1993, Southfield case with which Hernandez and the stark hit hers month's rape took place. In that incident the attack was aborted.

stolen from the parking lot at North Farmington High School on 13 Mile in Farmington Hills Feb. 16. A gold 1992 Lexus worth \$25,000 was stolen from Bob Saks on Grand River in Farmington Hills Feb. 16-17.

ington ratus res. to. The frame of a 1989 Ford Mus-tang (\$500) was stolen from Bob Saks on Grand River in Farming-ton Hills between Jan. 24 and Feb. 17. The engine, transmis-sion, doors and seats had already been removed from the car.

Three cars were vandalized at American Silk Screen on Hall-wood in Farmington Hills Feb.

'I always wanted to be a teacher. I always

sion. I never regretted a day of it.

dren," Symes said. "I could nev-er have children myself. So, my students were my children.

"I always said there were very few children that I couldn't bring home and raise on my own."

ana ny amin' ny anaza mina mina dia amin' ami Ny amin' a Ny amin' a



