

Former city treasurer dedicated to her work

Obituaries, 9A

By JILL HOCKMAN
STAFF WRITER

Former Farmington city treasurer Winona Woods, who held the position for 16 years before her 1984 retirement, died Friday at her Farmington home. She was 74.

Her friends and former co-workers at city hall remember Woods as a hard worker with a good sense of humor and a knack for oil painting. One of her paintings still hangs in Farmington City Hall.

A funeral service for Woods was held Tuesday at Thayer-Rock Funeral Home in Farmington.

"She was a great person — dedicated to her job more so than anybody I had ever known," said Joyce Griffiths, the city's deputy treasurer, who was hired by Woods as a general clerk in 1979. "I think she was in her glory when she was working."

"Winona was a hard worker. She had a great sense of humor," said Carol Murphy, executive secretary to the city manager, who's worked for the city since 1974. "She was very good with words . . . She was a very intelligent person — she was thinking all the time."

Woods was raised in Spiceland, Ind. In 1940, she moved to Detroit, where she attended business school. She lived in Farmington Hills and Farmington for 43 years.

She worked as a bookkeeper for Woods Coal Company, her husband's business. After that she worked at three more jobs, including a six-year stint at the Farmington Enterprise — now the Farmington Observer — where she worked her way up from a bookkeeper to managing editor. She also worked at Inter-City



Winona Woods

'She'd spend some time with you and make sure you understood exactly what you were getting into. She was a good worker, and really picky about her work.'

Joe Schornack
Farmington Fire Marshal

Press for about a year before she was hired away by the city of Farmington in 1968.

As treasurer, Woods saw the city switch its bookkeeping system from ledgers to computers. In addition to being in charge of the computer system, Woods was responsible for all city monies, filling in for vacationing employees and working with auditors during the city's annual audits.

At city hall, Woods had a reputation for being helpful, said Farmington Fire Marshal Joe Schornack, who has worked for the police department for some 24 years. Schornack said Woods often helped city employees figure out how much money to put in their retirement funds.

"She'd spend some time with you and make sure you understood exactly what you were getting into," he said. "She was a good worker, and really picky about her work."

Woods was still willing to help even after she retired. Griffiths said Woods volunteered to work without pay during one election when the clerk's office needed help with the computer system.

"She was a workaholic," said Jeanne Beck, the business service manager of the Observer & Eccentric Newspapers. Beck worked with Woods at the Farmington Enterprise in the 1960s, and the two women had kept in touch since then. "She had a very good sense of humor. . . . We had a lot of good times," Beck said.

Woods' daughter, Judy Rogers of Dearborn, said her mother had been in failing health for about the last two years. Woods loved to play Nintendo, work crossword puzzles and read books, Rogers said. Woods collected gems and minerals, and had plans to write a book about puns, Rogers said.

She was a member of the Oakland County Literacy Council, and tutored seven students in reading.

But most importantly, said Rogers, Woods was accomplished in business during a time when few women held powerful office jobs. "She really did accomplish a lot in her life in the business world," Rogers said.

Memorials may be sent to Community Living Centers, 3229 Grand River Ave., Farmington



Candy's dandy: Erin Recker (right) hands out candy at Clothes Encounters to Shirley Arthur of Redford and her three boys: Leroy, 3; Joshua, 2; and Matthew, 1.

Downtown treat Visitors flock to fest

By JILL HOCKMAN
STAFF WRITER

Attendance at downtown Farmington's Halloween Fun Fest increased by about a third over last year, with some 5,000 area residents attending the Saturday event, according to organizers.

"Each year it has grown," said Judy Downey, executive director of the Farmington Downtown Development Authority, which has sponsored the event since it began in 1993.

The free family-oriented Halloween party featured trick-or-treating at downtown stores, a petting zoo, a cake walk, a puppet show, live music, dancing, food vendors and costume contests.

In addition, the Farmington Civic Theatre offered free admission to showings of "Beetle Juice" and "Young Frankenstein."

The organization saved about \$2,500 in management fees this year because Judy Downey put on the party herself. In previous years, she hired someone else to organize the event, she said.



Mums the word: Max Haberman, 8, of Farmington Hills, went trick-or-treating with family and friends dressed as a mummy.

For downtown business owners, the increased attendance meant more trick-or-treaters. Dagwood's Deli — located in one of the busiest trick-or-treat areas — gave away some 2,700 pieces of candy, Downey said. All businesses handed out at least 1,000 pieces, she said.

About 200 children and a dozen adults competed in the event's costume contests, Downey said.

Greg Hohler, who owns the Farmington Civic Theatre, said almost 700 people — about the same number as last year — attended the theater's eight free movie showings. But downtown streets felt especially crowded, he said.

"It seemed like a lot more people than in previous years," Hohler said.

The DDA was formed in 1986 to improve and maintain Farmington's downtown area. Keep the it safe and clean and sponsor events to bring more shoppers to the area, Downey said. Most of the organization's \$220,000 annual budget is spent on marketing and maintenance, she said.

Events like the Halloween Fun Fest often introduce the public to downtown businesses, Downey said. She said at least one area resident who attended the event was overheard telling a business owner that "we did not know you were here."

"That's the key to an event like this," Downey said.

The DDA spent about \$6,500 to put on the event, Downey said. The organization saved about \$2,500 in management fees this year because Downey put on the party herself. In previous years, she hired someone else to organize the event, she said.

The Halloween Fun Fest has become the DDA's most popular one-day event. She started it when she began working for the organization in an effort to promote downtown businesses.

"We try to maintain a safe, clean, attractive area that people feel comfortable to walk around in be it day or night," Downey said.

Family frolic: Families streamed into downtown Farmington to hunt for candy and partake in the annual Halloween festival. Attendance was up this year as an estimated 5,000 people visited downtown.



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