

# Top employee tackles to-do lists with tenacity

BY WILLIAM COUTANT  
STAFF WRITER

Marilyn Richardson is often the first person that visitors see at the operations bureau at the Farmington Hills Police Department.

She greets the public in a way that will put them at ease and give them a good impression.

But there is a lot more to Richardson, 42, who was selected as Farmington Hills' Employee of the Year for 1996.

"We have been technologically behind the times," said her boss, Inspector Richard Niemisto. "Marilyn went out on her own, took classes and learned how to run computer programs. Now a lot of other employees seek her out when they have any problems with computers."

Richardson was honored last month as the city's best employee. That had police Chief Bill Dwyer positively beaming.

"You know, she is the first employee of the police depart-

ment to win that honor," he said.

For Dwyer, who is in his 12th year as the city's police chief, Richardson's rise has been symbolic of his department's accomplishments. She has been promoted while always remaining a part of "the team," which is her biggest brag.

"I have loved every job here," she said. "I've always felt like I'm part of a team and that we help each other."

The Livonia resident and Garden City West High School graduate began her career with the department in 1980 as a clerk in the records department and went to part-time during her two daughters' early years (Jill is now 13 and Laura is 11).

Richardson had earned a two-year liberal arts degree from Henry Ford Community College before joining the department.

She then began work in 1988 as a full-time secretary in administration and was the first contact many people had with the department.

"The first impression people have of the department is so important," Dwyer said. "Marilyn is very gregarious and is always ready to help people."

Richardson, who has been married to her engineer husband Bill for 21 years, continued with college part-time, taking business courses and eventually becoming interested — and proficient — in computer programming.

The department, along with the rest of the city, will begin to install new computers and programs, but Richardson's abilities have been part of a key transition for the department.

"I took a lot of classes and have taken the responsibility to become proficient," she said. "My family has been so supportive. Stick like glue to your family."

One of her biggest supporters and the person she calls her "hero" is her World War II veteran father, William.

"My mom died when I was 16



STAFF PHOTO BY BRIAN LAMBERT

**Gracious greeter:** Marilyn Richardson, a secretary in the Farmington Hills Police Department's operations bureau, makes visitors feel at ease. But it's her tireless work ethic that's made a lasting impression on her employers.

and he has always been there for me," she said.

She values her working relationships with many of the officers with whom she works, and considers them true professionals.

"Last year we had so much

going on in this department that they were continually working on high-profile cases," she said.

"But everybody helped each other. I think we got a lot of satisfaction from that. There is a real camaraderie here."

Richardson, who has been sec-

retary to the operations bureau commander since 1994, continues her educational pursuits and is planning to finish her bachelor's degree.

"I'm not sure what I'll do after that, but I plan to retire from here," she said.

## OBITUARIES

### ALICE ADELE EVANS

Alice Evans, 74, died Feb. 3 at her home in Port Sanilac, Mich.

Formerly of Detroit, Mrs. Evans was a member of the Port Sanilac VFW Auxiliary, the Order of Eastern Star, the Lioness Club and the first female Explorer Boy Scout Leader.

She is survived by daughters, Adele McGregor-Flannery, Gail Winn and Dale Maisano, and six grandchildren.

A memorial service was held on Feb. 7 at Heeney-Sunquist Funeral Home with the Rev. Arthur Henne officiating.

Donations can be made to the Educational Fund Grand Chapter OES of Mich., 1170 Mason Ave. Dearborn, 48124.

### FLORENCE L. GRAY

Florence Gray, 80, died Feb. 5 at Botsford General Hospital in

### Farmington Hills.

A resident of Farmington Hills, Mrs. Gray was the mother of six.

Survivors include sons, Richard VFW Auxiliary, the Order of Eastern Star, the Lioness Club and the first female Explorer Boy Scout Leader.

She is survived by daughters, Adele McGregor-Flannery, Gail Winn and Dale Maisano, and six grandchildren.

A memorial service was held on Feb. 7 at Heeney-Sunquist Funeral Home with the Rev. Arthur Henne officiating.

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### D'LISA ORMAN

D'Lisa Orman, 74, died Feb. 3 at Botsford General Hospital in Farmington Hills.

A resident of Farmington Hills, Mrs. Orman was born in Chicago and was a receptionist

and switchboard operator.

Survivors include husband, John H.; sons Mark and Michael and brother, George Sierant.

A memorial mass is scheduled for 10 a.m. Monday, Feb. 10, at the Church of St. Alexander in Farmington Hills.

Donations can be sent to the American Cancer Society.

### DORIS M. ELIAS

Doris Elias, 82, died Feb. 4 at Botsford General Hospital in Farmington Hills.

Formerly of Farmington Hills, Mrs. Elias worked for J.L. Hudson and enjoyed floral arranging.

Survivors include husband, Alfred; sons Charles Clark of Detroit and Richard Clark of Ypsilanti; brothers, Lloyd of Calif. and Maynard of Dearborn Heights; sister, Joyce Gaultz of Flor., one grandson and one great granddaughter.

Funeral services were held on Feb. 7 at Thayer-Rock Funeral Home in Farmington Hills.

### FRED G. MENKE

Fred Menke, 82, died Feb. 4 at Henry Ford Hospital in Detroit.

A lifetime resident of Farmington, Mr. Menke was an office manager for Thayer-Rock Funeral Home and a member of: Farmington Lodge #151, Farmington OES #239, Farmington White Shrine, American Legion Post 346, VFW Post 2269, Farmington Elks Charter member Lodge #1986, Moslem Shrine, Farmington Exchange Club, Northville Commandery #39 Knights Templar, Farmington Shrine Club, Farmington Goodfellows, Royal Arch Mason #176 Redford and a WWII Navy Veteran.

Survivors include son, Fred;

daughters, Wanda Dearing of Pickney, Gerry Homeszyn of Farmington, Carol Tyler of Forest, Va., 12 grandchildren and 11 great grandchildren.

Funeral services were held on Feb. 7 at Thayer-Rock Funeral Home.

Memorials can be sent to Shriners Hospital 434 Temple Ave, Detroit, 48201.

### KATHLEEN REILLY HUBER

Kathleen Reilly Huber, 73, died Feb. 5 at the Charter House of Novi.

Born in New York, Mrs. Huber was a homemaker and a Private 1st Class in WWII.

She is survived by her husband, Glen R.; sons Robert, Wayne, Thomas, Bruce and Frederick; sister, Louise Seguin; 12 grandchildren and 1

great granddaughter.

Funeral services were on Feb. 8, at the Church of the Holy Family.

### NANNIE PRASSEL

Nannie Prassel, 94, died Feb. 6, in Livonia.

Born in Frankstown, Penn., Mrs. Prassel was a homemaker and a resident of Farmington for 14 years.

Survivors include one son, Earl of Farmington; six grandchildren, 10 great grandchildren and 3 great-great grandchildren.

A memorial mass is scheduled for 2 p.m. today, Feb. 9, at Thayer-Rock Funeral Home in Farmington.

Donations can be sent to Angela Hospice, 14100 Newburgh, Livonia, 48164.

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