

# Community servant

## Departure from Botsford won't stop him from helping city

By TIM SMITH  
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Botsford General Hospital executive Jim McLaughlin's professional address is changing soon. But the longtime Farmington resident and community advocate promises that his home address isn't.

McLaughlin doesn't want to leave Botsford General Hospital. But he's moving on anyway, departing as of Aug. 27 for an apparent dream-like position with University of Detroit Jesuit High School.

"It's been a wonderful experience for me," said McLaughlin about his tenure at the Farmington Hills-based hospital. "Botsford has allowed me to participate in the community while serving in my role, and I appreciate that."

"I have nothing but fond memories of being there and wish

Botsford continued success."

Botsford Vice President of Planning, Marketing and Corporate Development Margaret Reimer called McLaughlin's decision "U of D's gain and our loss. I'm very happy for Jim. It's a wonderful career opportunity."

"But it's going to be a real hole for us to fill. He's done a wonderful job."

Reimer mentioned how the philanthropic McLaughlin spearheaded a successful fund-raising drive to renovate the Botsford Commons facility for assisted living in 1996-98. Approximately \$1.75 million was raised for the project.

The revamped Botsford Commons opened in summer 1998.

"Jim broadened the vehicles that people could donate to the hospital," Reimer added.

### Void to fill

Botsford President and Chief Executive Officer Gerson Coop-



Jim McLaughlin

er, who is vacationing, is aware of McLaughlin's resignation, Reimer said. After Cooper returns, discussions will begin about how to go about finding a

successor.

"Clearly, we'll have to replace Jim," Reimer said.

McLaughlin said the opportunity to go to U-D Jesuit came his way and that he didn't seek a new job.

Meanwhile, he and his wife, Marsha, plan on remaining in Farmington, where they have lived since 1977. The couple has two children.

The professional switch to U-D Jesuit, a college preparatory parochial school which draws students from Detroit and the suburbs, will force McLaughlin's immediate resignation from the Farmington/Farmington Hills Chamber of Commerce.

But McLaughlin said he will continue working on several other area boards. These include the Farmington Community Library, Governor Warner Museum Development Committee and Farmington/Farmington Hills Exchange Club.

Monday, Sept. 7, will be McLaughlin's first day as vice president for institutional advancement at U-D Jesuit.

### Similar role

Although his duties there will be similar to his Botsford job, which he began less than four years ago, it will be a promotion in title and salary. McLaughlin's final day at Botsford is Friday, Aug. 27.

"It's largely fund-raising and public relations for the school," he explained. "... It's similar to his Botsford post. But it is advancement for me, because it's going from a director to a vice president."

McLaughlin must step down from the chamber, because it was linked to his director of development position at Botsford.

"It's allowed me to meet some wonderful people in the community," McLaughlin said, about

his role with the chamber.

Chamber Chairman Barry Melamed said he doesn't expect McLaughlin to "be a stranger" to the Farmington/Farmington Hills community just because he's moving to U-D Jesuit.

"We should be thankful his new position won't take him away from the community," said Melamed, a longtime friend of McLaughlin's. "But it is too bad that he won't be serving on the chamber any longer, because he was very involved."

Melamed said McLaughlin would do whatever it took to serve the community, whether selling raffle tickets or ringing the bell for the Salvation Army.

"Jim is really tied in to the community," noted Reimer. "He's so personally invested."

# Mahalak leaves district, fondly recalls her career

By RICHARD PEARL  
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Carolyn Mahalak, who made regular testing and evaluation of Farmington Public School students a key part of the district's educational process, has retired after 35 years with the system.

A former second-grade teacher, Mahalak's "classroom" as the district's assessment and evaluation coordinator grew to include not only the children but their teachers, administrators and parents.

She was among the first women in Michigan and the nation to break into the then-male-dominated world of academic testing and evaluation.

Among her other accomplishments: Helping lead Farmington into computerized testing, evaluation and record keeping, being one of the district's key spokeswomen and serving on two state education boards.

Her retirement in June at age 56 fulfilled her half of last January's deal with husband and childhood sweetheart Keith, who retired after 36 years with Ford Motor Co.

She isn't planning a second career: "This is the career I like. I would never leave it for something else. I love this."

The Farmington couple plans to enjoy more traveling and cross-country sightseeing than her school schedule previously allowed - the Grand Canyon is on tap for September.

And the Mahalaks expect to have more time for their children, grandchildren and their church, St. Claire of Assisi.

Retirement will "give us new opportunities to meet new people and serve in other ways," said Carolyn, who also plans to stay active as board member, corresponding secretary and newsletter editor of her chapter of Delta Kappa Gamma, a national, sorority for professional educators.

Director of all district large-group testing - national tests such as the Iowa and the Differential Aptitude Test, plus the statewide Michigan Education Assessment Program (MEAP) test - Mahalak in a recent interview downplayed her accomplishments at first, choosing instead to call her district predecessors and mentors the true female pioneers.

However, she later acknowledged that one of her goals was the district's current emphasis on continuous testing and assessing of students as a means of gauging student, and coincidently district, growth and development.

She worked to put that emphasis "in the forefront of teachers' minds" while also helping them, administrators and parents to understand what the scores meant.

"They're more than just numbers," she said. Farmington teachers now are "far more tuned into" testing and assessment, she said, and in fact are merging instruction with daily assessment.

That, said Mahalak, "can do nothing but make the whole system better and stronger and



Barbara Cherem - Farmington schools

'She's a wonderful person to work with, always willing to learn new things.'

serve students better.

**Parents, too**  
Even parents have become "educated to assessment," she said. "That's something that has been needed" and is "a real step forward."

She credited the district school board's focus on assessment for the growth in that area and praised board members as being "very competent ... and very informed on current directions in education."

Mahalak also is "real pleased" with the centralized, computerized student database, which she worked to develop and promote. Because the database has many students' complete attendance and testing records, teachers and administrators can see how a student has progressed as soon as a student enrolls.

Ten years ago, Mahalak said, getting such information took many man-hours of digging through old records at each school.

**Surveys help**  
Computer surveys have added to the information database by making it possible for both students and teachers to assess course offerings and programs.

The database, made possible by a tax increase voters approved two years ago, also can show how Farmington students' MEAP scores compare with those of students throughout Oakland County and the state, Mahalak said.

Eventually, the database may issue report cards for all grades, Mahalak said. The bottleneck is "getting all that technology in place" by in-putting data and training teachers and staff.

**Trend setter:**  
Recently retired Carolyn Mahalak was among the first Michigan women to break into the then-male-dominated world of academic testing and evaluation. Mahalak also was considered a key district spokeswoman about the often-controversial Michigan Education Assessment Program.

"It's not complete," she said of the database, "but (it is) better than it's ever been."

### 'Go-to' person

An offshoot of her deep knowledge of students' state and national test performances was her becoming a key "go-to" person for parents trying to decide about moving into the district.

Her authoritative information about the district made her an unofficial spokeswoman - or, as she prefers to say, "ambassador of goodwill."

"I got a lot of those phone calls."

A Livonia native like husband Keith, Carolyn began as a Gill Elementary teacher in 1964. She was hired out of the University of Detroit by Minnie Zielke, Farmington's then-assistant superintendent of elementary education and a pioneering Oakland County female school administrator. Zielke would become one of Mahalak's mentors.

At the urging of curriculum administrators such as Judy White and Mary Lou Ankele, Mahalak became a district reading and gifted-student specialist, handling all but three schools.

After earning a master's in reading at Eastern Michigan University in 1970, she moved into testing and evaluation, first under Fred die Frost and then Barbara Cherem, the district's present director of evaluation, assessment and special projects.

Mahalak is "very professional, very conscientious ... very devoted" to testing, Cherem said. "She's a wonderful person to work with, always willing to learn new things" who is also "very supportive" of the district's teachers, Cherem added.

Mahalak served on the Michigan Educational Resource Association board for three years and on the State Board of Education ethics committee.

# Aging parent classes offered

The Oakland County Health Division and the city of Farmington Hills Senior Division are offering a series of four Aging Parent Classes 7-9 p.m. Tuesdays, Aug. 31, Sept. 7, 14, and 21.

Classes will be at the Farmington Hills Senior Center within the Costick Activities Center at 28600 11 Mile Road.

## OAKLAND COUNTY HEALTH DIVISION

The Aging Parent classes target the "Sandwich Generation" who is caring for aging parents, relatives, or friends. Topics include: understanding normal physical and psychoso-

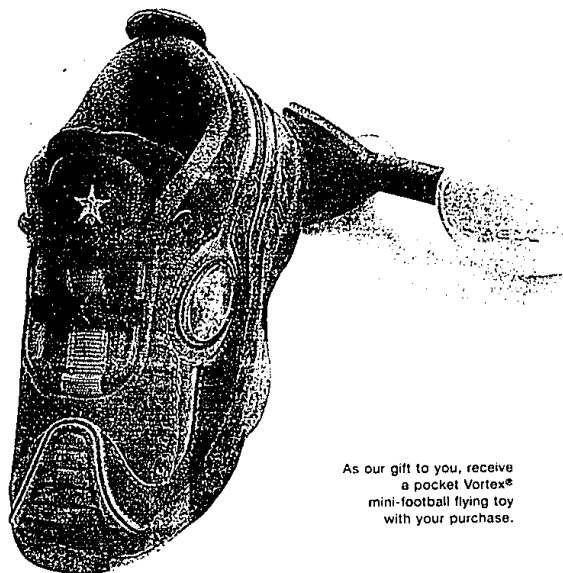
cial changes of an aging parent, recognizing and dealing with caretakers' feelings and needs, determining when interventions are necessary, discussion of alternative living arrangements, review of community resources and more.

To register, you must call the Senior Center at 473-1830 prior to the first class on Tuesday, Aug. 31. A materials fee of \$10 per family is also due prior to the first class.

For information, call Beth Falkenstein at the Senior Center at 473-1822.

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