

BARB LOFTEN

Barb has been working on the UW-Whitewater campus for thirty-eight years and has accumulated a great many memories of the university and the people with whom she has worked over those years. She began her employ on campus in August 1970 and, aside from a brief leave of a year and a half, she has been going strong ever since. Her first ten years were with the College of Business & Economics. She still remembers when that college moved into Carlson Hall in January 1971 – the year after the Old Main fire. She had started working for the College of Business & Economics while the faculty and staff were still in their temporary location in Andersen Library, following the fire. She noted that the faculty members were arranged at small tables around the stacks of books on the second floor of the library until they were finally moved into Carlson. The position of Assistant Dean was created for that college and Barb worked as the assistant to that individual (Denny Tiger initially, then Leon Hermsen) for five years. During her second five years in COBE, Barb worked for the Associate Dean of the college.

She was reinstated after a brief leave and began working in the Admissions Office. She has been there for twenty-eight years and still enjoys her work. For the first twenty-three years in Admissions, Barb was the office manager. She was responsible for making certain that the office ran smoothly and efficiently and that included supervision of the employment and training of the student workers, as well as other duties related to the ongoing function of the office. Five years ago, her duties branched off in another direction and she was asked to be the business manager in the office. She now works with all of the budgets and student payroll – everything related to the financial aspect of the office. The Admissions Office employs about 25 students during the academic year and a small number over the summer months. The Assistant Director is now in charge of supervising the students since the student employees maintain the front desk/reception area, and since all of the office files are on ImageNow – a new electronic system to which the files were transferred five years ago. Barb notes that most calls coming in to the office over the weekend are redirected to her phone and she either responds to those calls or directs them to the appropriate staff member. “The students appreciate getting a response from a “real” person”, she smiles, and it is obvious that she does not mind taking care of those calls.

Barb and her husband, Dan, have been married 39 ½ years and they have two children, both of whom are grown and married. Dan works for Plymouth Tube Company in East Troy. Travis, their son, is a CFO at a design company in Middleton. He is married to Dayna and they have two children – Aiden (four years old) and Lilly (two years old). Dayna is at home most of the time but has her own business called Born for a Reason Therapy. She taught special education and now works one-on-one with autistic children, going directly to individual homes to work with her clients. Barb’s daughter, Amanda (Mandi) is married to Josh and both of them are teachers. Mandi teaches computer classes at a middle school and Josh teaches business courses at a high school. They welcomed their first child – daughter Clara Jolene – into the world this past Monday, October 25th. Barb is proud of the fact that Travis, Dayna, Mandi and Josh are all graduates of UW-Whitewater.

When Barb is not working or spending time with her children and grandchildren, she enjoys helping Dan with his large vegetable and flower garden. She says she does a lot of canning and freezing when the vegetables are ready to be harvested. She likes dabbling in most types of crafts – when she tires of one thing, she moves on to another. She also has fun antique hunting in shops and at flea markets. She is not a big fan of auctions because she prefers not to have to wait around to purchase an item. She and Dan like to travel and usually prefer northern Wisconsin locations in the summer and destinations in Florida during the winter. She has siblings living around the Fort Meyers Beach area so she enjoys visiting them. When Dan is not puttering around the garden, he likes to hunt and fish. Both of them manage to keep quite busy when they are not at work.

In the Admissions Office, Barb loves working with students and watching them grow as they progress throughout their UWW careers. She has seen many students when they come in as freshmen and when they graduate with their degrees. She says it's one of the most satisfying parts of her job – watching the changes those students undergo and seeing their accomplishments when they are preparing to leave the campus. And that directly links to what Barb likes most about UW-Whitewater – the people. “I think everyone is here to help make things better for the students.” And it's clear from our conversation with her that she definitely enjoys assisting students in any way that she is able.

A few fond memories that stick out in Barb's mind over the years include the changes in technology. She remembers when she first started working on campus and they used a mag card equipment system to get data from the computer center and process students. That was state-of-the-art at that time. Then, they started using Wang monitors and ultimately shifted to Wang computers with the 5 ½ inch floppy disks. We have certainly come a long way since then. Her fondest memories are of the many great people with whom she worked over the years. She is very happy to be able to help so many people and to know that they are appreciative of that help.

Regarding the steady stream of changes on campus, Barb is quick to note that she likes all of the changes. “It's always exciting! Things are thought out and well planned. All of the advances in technology really make a positive difference. The people who make up the group that makes the decisions do a great job!” She appreciates the fact that an individual can now relocate just about anywhere, taking a computer and setting up a new work area in a short period of time. She is also enjoying occupancy of the newly remodeled Roseman building after spending so many years in the aging Baker Hall.

Would she change anything on campus, if given an opportunity? She smiles as she quips that a parking spot a little closer to her office might be nice. On a more serious note, Barb hopes that UW-Whitewater can offer more to the non-traditional students that it is trying to recruit – more evening classes, weekend classes, etc. She would like to see classes that better fit the schedules of that group of students. And that is what we notice when speaking with Barb – she is always thinking about the students.