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Helen Linwood: Keeping Track of History

PROFILES

has assembled an excellent group of craftsmen to take care of these various tasks, but is still understaffed.

Now about the sheep crook. Even though Barry was raised in a Philadelphia suburb (Yeadon) he always had a yen for agricultural activities. This led him to Penn State University where he graduated in 1974 with a B.S. degree in Animal Science. Following graduation, he became Assistant Herdsman of Sheep Facilities, at Penn State in 1978, and was responsible for managing three purebred flocks and one commercial flock. The work included research studies, feed mixing, supervision of technical services and student employees, operation of machinery, and general maintenance.

This background explains Barry's ecstatic reaction when a new flock of sheep recently arrived at New Bolton Center as part of the program to expand teaching in small ruminant medicine. A new sheep shed was built and a flock of yearlings was purchased from Penn State University. To complete the flock, a high-quality Dorset ram was donated by Dr. and Mrs. Robert Herr of Nix Besser Farm in Narvon, Pennsylvania. The sheep project is under the professional supervision of Dr. Colin Johnstone, Assistant Professor of Parasitology, who is assisted by Dr. Susan Donoghue, a faculty member of the Section of Nutrition. A natural consequence of events was the designation of Barry Haines as shepherd.

Mr. Haines is married and has a son, Matthew. As might be expected, Barry's interests run to outdoor activities such as hunting, fishing, archery, boating, gardening and ammunition reloading. And, of course, to sheep!

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Would you like to know how many students graduated in 1902, or how many matriculated ten years later? You may think that a lot of searching would be involved to get this information. Wrong. Just ask Helen Linwood and she'll provide the answers in less than a minute.

Helen Linwood, known to many alumni as Helen Jarrett, is the Assistant for Admissions and Academic Affairs at the School of Veterinary Medicine, and she keeps these and other vital statistics at her fingertips.

Her title wasn't always that formal. When Helen first came to work at the school in 1949, to succeed Miss Edna Wesley Tuteur, who had been chief clerk for over forty years, she was senior clerk. Miss Tuteur stayed about a year to guide Helen into the complex duties of the chief clerk. Back then, the office was in the old quadrangle building near the arch and the chief clerk's desk stood in the bay window so a sharp eye could be kept on everyone and everything.

The school was not as large as it is today, the office not only handled admissions, but also prepared the budget, maintained personnel records, and hired the clerical staff. As the school grew and the student body and the faculty expanded, Helen's duties changed: her office no longer prepares the budget or handles personnel records. Admissions work has grown so that it now occupies much of Helen's and the staff's time. As supervisor of one of the nerve centers of the school, Helen Linwood's duties are anything but routine. Any given day may bring requests for information on a new survey being conducted by the dean's office, explanation of a new University policy, or providing historical information about a former faculty member.

Her office, located since 1964 in the Rosenthal Building, is a beehive of activity as Helen dispatches her many duties. One of the most important, particularly from a student point of view, is managing admissions and insuring that all letters, transcripts, and forms arrive promptly for submission to the admissions committee. Imagine the organization and attention to detail required to keep track of the more than 700 files assembled by Helen from November to May each year. Once that process is completed, Helen still continues to work since she is often called upon to arrange counseling meetings for rejected applicants to explore late admittance possibilities.

On top of all of that, Helen keeps two very special historical records. The Matriculation Book, a thick, old-fashioned journal reminiscent of another era, and the Graduate Book. When classes were smaller, each student would come to the office to sign the Matriculation Book. "Obviously," Helen explains, "with a class of 109 the line would be too long, and this tradition is no longer followed." Instead, Helen enters the name of each student. The

Graduate Book is a 152-page volume, begun in 1887 when the chief clerk entered the names of the first graduating class. "It's the history of the school in a nutshell," Helen proudly stated as she pointed out the old-fashioned penmanship of one of her predecessors. The class of 1982 will begin Volume II and Helen had to search for a suitable book.

Helen loves her work and has a special affection for the University because of her undergraduate days here. "I had so much fun when I went to school on this campus," she reminisced. After receiving a Bachelor of Science degree from the School of Education, she taught for a few years, and during summer vacations, worked in the Zoology department. When Helen learned of the job opening for senior clerk at the veterinary school she returned to Penn.

The school has played an important part in her personal life for it was here that she met her husband, Norman, while she was working at the front desk. At that time, he was a detective lieutenant with the Philadelphia Police Department, on leave of absence to do investigative work at the University.

Helen and Norman live in Norristown, and until last June operated an antique shop in their spare time. "We loved it, but we did not have the time to go to the auctions and sales to scout for new pieces," she said. "It has become very hard to find quality pieces. You have to spend many hours at auctions and may come away with only one item."

Antiques are still an important part of their lives, although in a different form. Norman has a great collection of newspapers, dating back to colonial times and spanning the history and development of this country. "One of the papers we have has a story in which Mrs. O'Leary claims that it was not her cow which started the Chicago fire by kicking over the kerosene lamp," Helen chuckled. "I start reading the stories and history comes alive, it's so much more interesting than reading a history book." Helen has plenty of opportunity to relive the past as they index the entire collection. Helen explained that the old papers have to be handled carefully, especially those after 1830 because they were printed on cellulose-based paper rather than rag paper. They have to be stored flat and in the dark to prevent deterioration.

Helen likes to get to work early, to have a quiet hour away from the ringing phones, to get a good start on her daily work. But even at eight o'clock the phones are ringing. "People think we are here at all hours," she laughed. Her good spirits help her keep calm in a demanding, hectic job. Right now it's time to complete the admission files for the next class. Soon their names will be entered in the Matriculation Book, and Volume II of the Graduate Book will be started. A set of historical school records, which have been part of Helen Linwood's life for more than thirty years, will be continued.