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Staff retirement

Garrett Center hostess retires after 33 years on the Hill

BY JOSH COFFMAN
Herald reporter

After working in Garrett Center's lobby for 33 years, seeing many generations of Western students, faculty and staff, Theresa Gerard is retiring.

Gerard, 87, said she didn't want to leave Western, but colon surgery, which requires three to six months recovery time, made it necessary to leave the Hill.

"I am really crazy about working there," she said. "I looked forward every day to going to work."

Although she initially retired from Western in March 1989, Gerard kept working the desk in Garrett through last semester.

She resigned from the position Jan. 1, Human Resources Manager Ivy Roberson said.

Scott Taylor, Western's Student Activities Organization and Leadership director and Gerard's supervisor, said she was leaving because of health problems.

President Gary Ransdell recently sent Gerard a letter wishing her a speedy recovery and acknowledging her as a member of the Western family. Gerard said she was happy to receive it.

Gerard graduated from Western Kentucky State College with a biology degree in 1936.

After graduating, she moved to Cloverport to begin her teaching career.

Gerard later took a job teaching juvenile delinquents at Ormsby Village, near Anchorage. She said she enjoyed teaching and being around kids, but she didn't like teaching the delinquents.

"If a kid was bad, you'd put him in jail," she said. "It wouldn't matter, though. The superintendent

would just come and bail him out."

She married Paul E. Gerard, a Bowling Green dentist, after working in Anchorage. He joined the Army as a dentist, and the two traveled the country while he was reassigned from base to base.

They lived in Oklahoma; Palm Springs, Calif.; and Cathedral City, Calif., where she and her husband, along with other Armed Forces in the area, were treated to USO Shows that featured Bob Hope and other legends.

"The movie stars out there entertained us all the time," she said.

Gerard lived in towns across Kentucky and bases across the country, but she felt at home at Western, working at the receptionist's desk.

"There wasn't a job on the Hill that I wanted except that job," she said. "I enjoyed being around the people. I'd try to help people when a wife or husband would call for a professor."

Students and coworkers said they would miss Gerard's presence in the Garrett lobby.

Auburn sophomore Jenny Corum said Gerard is a person who loves to talk and has a lot to say. She said she could never finish her homework when she saw Gerard because Gerard was always telling stories.

"She did all the talking, really. I just listened," Corum said. "She was great. I would come up between classes and just talk to her."

June Conley, a BSA at Garrett who worked with Gerard for six years, said Gerard was thoughtful of others.

"Her mind is really not on herself," she said. "It's



Price Chambers/Herald

Theresa Gerard, 87, has worked at the Garrett Center for 33 years. She returned to her alma mater after a teaching career that sent her to schools across Kentucky.

on her job or the school."

Conley said she knew that Gerard loved the students, and they loved her, too.

"She did a good job here," Conley said. "To be

her age, she really held things together ... Some that graduated and left still send her flowers."

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