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SCHOOLS

deSilva retires after 28 years at high school

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Special to Tri-Village News

After 31 years and thousands of students, the final school bell is ringing for Donnajeane deSilva.

The educator, who has taught all aspects of business at Grandview Heights High School for 28 years, is retiring at the end of this school year.

In the beginning of her career, deSilva taught shorthand and typing, standards of business in the early 1970s.

She now teaches accounting and business law. As technology has advanced, so have her classes, which now incorporate word processing and business computer application.

High school Principal Steve Allen said deSilva has "earned her retirement."

"Donnajeane is a wonderful, wonderful person. She cares deeply about the kids," Allen said.

She has served as the "social director" of the faculty, and is always the organizer of faculty events, he said. According to Allen, deSilva has served as the ambassador to the Marble Cliff/Grandview Chamber of Commerce, as well.

Growing up as a youngster in the Pickerington Local School District, deSilva would frequently be called upon to fill in for a teacher's unexpected short absence in the lower grade levels. Because of this, she decided she loved working with children.

Her favorite subject in school was music until she reached high school and discovered the area of business was her true love, deSilva said. Her business teacher Frances Brooke, who taught for 43 years, was her mentor.

In all her 31 years of teaching, deSilva has always taught at the high school level. She initially was employed in Clear Fork near Mansfield where she also taught business. She has taught at Grandview Heights High School since 1972.

She said teaching has changed a lot over the years.

She feels that the state proficiency tests have changed the way that kids are taught, deSilva said. Schools are much better now at recognizing learning disabilities, she noted.

She also said with a laugh, "Of course, the dress code has changed a lot."

One of her proudest accom-

plishments is a scholarship that the Northwest Kiwanis named after her in honor of the 12 years she served as the high school's Key Club adviser. She said this has been a "banner year" because another Grandview student was named lieutenant governor of Key Club for the state of Ohio.

She also coaches the school's Smart Team, which won a state competition and went on to the national level of competition.

She said she believes strongly that attending the Grandview Heights City School District is like getting a private school education because of its size and individual student attention. She cited an example of a student who had attended his first year of high school at another much larger district, getting more help in four days in Grandview than he had received in all the years he had attended the other school district.

Teachers can have more impact in Grandview because of the smaller number of students, deSilva said.

She said her plans for retirement include some traveling and volunteer work. She has

volunteered at the United Methodist Children's Home and Ronald McDonald House in the past, and has plans to continue. She said her husband is also retiring and that after 31 years teaching, it is "time to do something else," and "try something new."

She said she has so many wonderful memories of all her years of teaching that she can't recall only one special one. She attended many school activities during the years and has been invited to numerous graduations and weddings of former students.

Grandview is like being part of a big family, deSilva said.

She was at a graduation recently when a man told her she had taught all of his children, as well as all of his grandchildren, deSilva said.

"I have taught many children of my former students over the years, as well as their siblings," deSilva said.

When asked what she will miss most about teaching, it took her a moment to reply. In a tearful voice she replied, "the kids."

She will be missed, too.

"We will be hard pressed to replace her," Principal Allen said.