



Kathi Schneider (left) opens a gift from Machinists District Lodge 24 office staff co-workers Helen Ng, Rochelle Conrad, and Angela Sass at her retirement party Nov. 30. Schneider has worked for the Machinists for nearly 41 years.

After 40+ years, Schneider says goodbye to Machinists Union

Forty-one years is a long time for anything. Yet, over that period of time Kathi Schneider has worked for the same union organization ... inside the exact same building ... since 1969.

"I think my car could drive itself to work," Schneider says of her daily commute from Gresham to inner Southeast Portland, where Machinists District Lodge 24 is located.

Not any longer. Schneider retired Nov. 30. The title she retired under was administrative assistant, but she's held just about every office position at the union — from general secretary to bookkeeper to chief of staff. She also was instrumental in helping the Machinists establish a research department and benefits office.

"I've always thought of myself as a secretary," said Schneider, who is a 40-year member of Office and Professional Employee Local 11.

"Although Kathi has a formal title to her job, it doesn't begin to describe what she has done for our union," said Directing Business Representative Bob Petroff, one of five DBRs that she has worked for. (Bob Kennedy, Gary Will, George Miller, and Dave Plant were the others.)

Along the way she has made many lifelong friends, including her "best friend" — and husband — retired Machinist Dick Schneider.

After graduating from Western Business University in February 1969, Kathi Hintze was hired to work in the office at Machinists Lodge 1005 by then-Secretary-Treasurer Ralph Kaufman. The office was at 3645 SE 32nd Ave., just off Powell Blvd.

It wasn't until July of 1974 that the Machinists created a full-service district representing all locals in Oregon and Southwest Washington. The District Lodge was headquartered at the 32nd Avenue address and Schneider was hired as the first bookkeeper.

It was at the District Lodge that she met and later married Dick Schneider. At the time, he was a business rep for Lodge 63. He later was hired to work for the Machinists Grand Lodge. Together they have five children and 13 grandkids.

Only 59, Kathi Schneider actually wasn't quite ready to retire, but upcoming changes to the Western States Pension Plan forced her (and several other longtime Local 11 members) to leave early or lose a significant amount of their pension.

"The difference for me was about a 40 percent reduction if I worked till I was 60," Schneider said.

A reception was held for her Nov. 30 at the union hall. She said she had no trouble finding the building.

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