

School Of Ed Bids Adieu To Longtime Colleagues, Friends

Widdis Facilitated Growth As Field Coordinator

Some might call it "retirement," but Corinne "Connie" Widdis has another word for it. Ever the educator, Widdis is ending her tenure with the School of Education this spring on her own "terms."

"I'd like to think of it as 'graduating' to the next chapter of my life," Widdis says.

Widdis, 64, has served as a full time faculty member in the School of Education for 15 years after serving on the faculty of the Education Department at Fontbonne College in St. Louis, MO.

Widdis began her stint at GVSU as a field coordinator with the School of Education at a time when the number of elementary student teachers was growing. She also taught diversity classes during the summer.

"I've really enjoyed being in the schools working with supervising teachers, principals and student teachers," Widdis said. "Grand Valley has given me the opportunity to stay current in the field and to share new knowledge as well as develop my teaching skills."

Widdis cited the tremendous growth at GVSU as the most significant change over the past 15 years.

"Not only in the number of students, but in the contributions of our excellent new faculty and staff," she said. "They contribute fresh and enlightened perspectives for the continual improvement of our teacher preparation program."

Widdis said that courses in Diversity, Managing Classroom Environments and Educational Technology have also enhanced the



Corinne 'Connie' Widdis is retiring after 15 years with GVSU's School of Education

School of Ed's required professional program.

"I'll miss everything about my job, because I loved it," Widdis said. "I'll miss my colleagues who have been most supportive, and I'll miss my wonderful students whose competence, enthusiasm and commitment have encouraged me."

Widdis helped develop the award-winning Schoolyard Wildlife Habitat/Outdoor Classroom Project in Muskegon County, and expects to continue working with that program, along with spending more time on her golf, writing, gardening and computer skills.

"My grandmother lived 104 years without medication or disease," Widdis said. "I've got a few years left!"

Matthews Retiring As Dean's Assistant

For nearly 12 years, Thelma Matthews has been the liaison to the Dean of the School of Education. Beginning next fall, someone else will replace her smiling face in Mackinac Hall.

Matthews, 65, is retiring from her role as administrative assistant to the Dean of the School of Education.

"First and foremost, I have enjoyed the people here," Matthews said. "They are great. I've also loved the wonderful working environment and the beautiful campus."

"I'll miss the people I work with and the wonderful relationships I have developed. I've witnessed phenomenal growth at both the graduate and undergraduate levels."

At GVSU, Matthews was known for her beaming personality and the ability to make things happen. During retirement, Matthews said she will relax by doing yard work, spending time at the family cottage and some travel.

"I don't think I'll have much trouble finding things to do with my time," she said. "Once I get things organized, I'll look for interesting volunteer work, or something along those lines. Who knows? I may even come back to GVSU to do a little bit of temporary work."



Matthews

Colleagues

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