



Contact: Alex Paul, Linn County Communications Officer, 541-967-3825 or email: apaul@co.linn.or.us

LCSO says goodbye and thanks to Debbie Heinonen

She worked for seven sheriffs in 43-year career

In 1972, fresh out of West Albany High School, Deborah Heinonen — then Nordyke — was hired by Sheriff George Miller to work in the Civil Division of the Linn County Sheriff’s Office, which at that time was on the first floor of the courthouse.

“I was so naïve,” Heinonen, 67, said. “It was an eye-opener to assist deputies with the transport of female inmates at times when matrons — as they were called then — weren’t available.”

She said the jail — which was on the third floor — was creepy, so she avoided going there as much as possible.

Heinonen never dreamed she would work with seven sheriffs for a total of 43 years in two stints.

But Heinonen now plans to stay retired, play a lot more golf, travel (she likes Hawaii a lot) and spend time with her two grandsons ages 7 and 4, who live in Sandy and her 92-year-old mother who lives in North Albany.

Daughter Kelly lives in Tualatin and daughter Lindsey lives in Sandy.

“I have loved coming to work,” Heinonen said. “It’s always interesting and different, but I know it’s time to retire.”

Heinonen worked for one year, married her husband Allen, and moved to Pullman, Washington, for a year.

She and Allen — who is retired from Citizens Bank — returned to Albany and she was rehired at the Sheriff’s Office, beginning a long career as an administrative assistant to sheriffs Ken Goin, Art Martinak, Dave Burright and Tim Mueller.

In 2009 she went to work for the Oregon State Sheriff’s Association in Salem and returned to the LCSO in 2014, working part-time for sheriffs Bruce Riley and Jim Yon in the accounting office.

“Debbie has served with the Sheriff’s Office for 43 excellent years!” Sheriff Yon said.



Above: Debbie Heinonen is going to travel and spend more time golfing and with her two grandsons now that she has retired after 43 years with the Linn County Sheriff’s Office. **Below:** Heinonen was honored by Sheriff Jim Yon, the seventh sheriff for whom she has worked since 1972.

“Her experience and knowledge will be missed tremendously. I wish her the best in her retirement.”

Oct. 25, Yon presented Heinonen with the Sheriff’s Award and a certificate. She also received flowers and other gifts of appreciation. Co-workers praised her for being someone they could always rely upon for advice and being a “gracious”

person.

Support Services Division Captain Micah Smith thanked her for “training me up when I was a lieutenant and now in my new role.”

“I love your wisdom,” Administrative Assistant Maralee Knox said. “You are always



encouraging me in ways you don’t even know.”

Heinonen said it has “been a privilege working here. I have worked with great people, each unique in their own way,” and added, “I have special memories of all of you in my heart.”

Quotable

“I have worked with great people, each unique in their own way ... I have special memories of all of you in my heart.”

Debbie Heinonen