

HALLOFFAME

For the past 28 years, **Darlene Macklem** has gone out of her way to help the residents of Wayne Township in Clinton County get the information they need, all while embracing technology to bring the township into the modern era.

Going Above and Beyond

Darlene Macklem

Wayne Township, Clinton County
28 years of service

BY BRENDA WILT / ASSISTANT EDITOR

Darlene Macklem is so good at being a township secretary that in addition to serving in that capacity for Wayne Township in Clinton County for the past 28 years, she also works for nearby Pine Creek Township as well as Cummings Township in Lycoming County, where she lives.

"I grew up in Wayne Township and lived there until 2000," she says. "My husband's job changed, and we relocated to Lycoming County, about five miles from the Clinton County line in Pine Creek Valley."

Macklem began her township career in 1992 when the previous long-time secretary decided to retire.

"One of the supervisors contacted me and asked me to interview," she recalls. "I got the position, and within a month, the former secretary passed away. Fortunately, she had kept wonderful records. She had been a school-



teacher, and the hand-written minutes were beautiful."

The only drawback is that nothing was computerized, Macklem says. She had no training and had to do everything by hand — write checks, reconcile bank accounts, and record minutes. Finally, the board of supervisors bought her a computer to use in her home, which doubles as the township office.

"DCED [the state Department of Community and Economic Development] provided someone to come to my home and train me on QuickBooks,"

For nearly three decades, **Darlene Macklem** has been serving the residents as secretary of Wayne Township in Clinton County. She says she loves what she does, which explains why she also puts her organizational talents to work in nearby Pine Creek Township and even Cummings Township across the line in Lycoming County.

she says. "The man was semi-retired or just retired and was great. He helped me set up the chart of accounts and got me started. The computerization of everything was great."

Macklem embraced the technology and continues to do so today.

"She is up on all the modern technology," Wayne Township supervisor Jim Maguire says. "I can't say the same. I can talk on the phone, but I've probably only sent about 10 emails this year."

That's a common refrain among the township officials, Macklem says.

"For the most part, it's not an issue," she says. "They use email and so on, but when it comes to more complicated tools, it can be difficult."

For example, when interviewed for this article, she was in the midst of trying to convince the supervisors to use

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“I’m very organized and detail-oriented and **go out of my way** to get people the information they want or need.”

Zoom to hold online video meetings during the COVID-19 crisis.

‘It’s a lot more involved’

While technology has made some tasks easier, it hasn’t cut down on her work flow.

“You feel like there should be less work now that everything is computerized and you do everything online, but it seems like every year, there are more reports required by more agencies,” she says. “A lot of the time, you are entering information on a state site and it’s the same information you entered on another site.”

Right-to-Know Law requests, including from commercial entities, Act 537 sewage planning, and the Uniform Construction Code have all added to Macklem’s responsibilities over the years.

“Everyone wants more information,” she says. “There seem to be more requirements and paperwork whenever there is any kind of development, from the county, the departments of Environmental Protection and Labor and Industry, and on and on. It’s a lot more involved.”

Macklem’s familiarity with all those rules and regulations is one of the attributes that make her a good secretary, Maguire says.

“She represents our township very well,” he says. “The knowledge that she brings and her ability to suggest solutions are so valuable.”

‘I can get the answers’

Finding solutions for township residents is what keeps Macklem doing this work.

“I’m very organized and detail-oriented and go out of my way to get people the information they want or need,” she says. “It makes me feel good when I’m able to help people because they don’t always know where to go to get answers. I might not be the right person, but I can get the answers for them.”

Working with a good team at Wayne Township makes that a lot easier.

“We all genuinely care about the township and do our best for it,” she says.

Macklem is also fortunate to have family members who understand what it means to work in government service. Her husband is a law enforcement supervisor for the Pennsylvania Game Commission in Lycoming County, and her son is a game warden in Huntingdon County. Macklem’s daughter is a learning support teacher who received the Teacher of the Year Award for the Jersey Shore Area School District just before the schools closed due to COVID-19.

With the support of her township coworkers and supervisors, as well as her family, Macklem says she has no plans to retire in the near future.

“I really like what I’m doing,” she says.

How PSATS has helped this Hall of Famer

Darlene Macklem often turns to the PSATS Discussion group for help.

“It’s very nice when you need to ask a question and you can go there and get answers,” she says.

Macklem also appreciates the communication and guidance PSATS has provided during the COVID-19 outbreak.

“In this time of crisis, PSATS has been good about getting the information out there.”

That’s a welcome thought for Jim Maguire.

“I can’t say enough good about her,” he says. “If we did not have her, we would be totally lost.” ♦

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