



SECRETARY

HALLOFFAME

In our first installment of the Secretary Hall of Fame, the News honors **Erma Martin of Mineral Township in Venango County**. A fixture in the community for 55 years, she is possibly Pennsylvania's longest serving township secretary. Ask anyone, though, and they'll tell you that's not the only thing that makes Martin special.

'Call Erma'

Erma Martin

Mineral Township, Venango County
55 years of service

BY JILL ERCOLINO / MANAGING EDITOR

She very well may be Pennsylvania's longest serving township secretary, but it's not this accomplishment that makes Erma Martin of Mineral Township, Venango County, special.

It's who she is.

"I call her 'my Erma,'" supervisor and roadmaster Fred Krizinsky says, "because she's there whenever I need her."

A fixture in the township for 55 years, Martin is well-known for her precise bookkeeping, sunny disposition, and ability to make things happen in this small rural community with a population of 538.

"It's hard to put into words how much she does because I'm sure she does more than any of us know," Krizinsky says. "She's a great asset. You just can't put a value on that."

"And I know one thing," he says, chuckling, "the residents would vote



Erma Martin, possibly Pennsylvania's longest serving township secretary, believes the secret to her longevity lies in her attitude. "I've always been even-keeled," she says. "Nothing rattles me." (Photo courtesy of the township.)

one of us out of office before getting rid of her."

A pioneer

Martin began working for the township in 1957, when the price of gas was 24 cents a gallon and new homes could be had for about \$12,000.

"The secretary quit, and my father-in-law, who was a township supervisor, asked me if I wanted the job," she says. "I've been here ever since. That's why I always say, 'It's not what you know, but who you know.'"

A pioneer in many respects, Martin was one of the first women in her family to take a job outside the home. In addition to juggling part-time duties with the township, she worked full-time at a nearby medical facility. In between, Martin and her husband raised three children.

While things certainly have changed since those early days in Mineral Township — Martin's kids have grown up, and managing the municipality has become more complex and time-consuming — one thing remains the same: The secretary's home still doubles as the municipality's unofficial office.

"Oh, you should see my kitchen table," she says. "It's always full of checkbooks."

Martin, however, wouldn't have it any other way. She likes being busy. Even more than that, though, she likes helping her neighbors.

"The motto around here is 'Call

"I know one thing, the residents would **vote one of us out of office** before getting rid of her."

Erma – she'll fix it," Martin says with pride. "I love this job. I always have."

But 50-plus years? That's quite a stretch for any job, especially for a township secretary, many of whom oversee the community's day-to-day business and need to be just as well-versed in state and federal laws as the supervisors, if not more so.

Some secretaries don't last a year in such a challenging position. How did Martin hang in for 55?

That's easy, says the secretary, who estimates she has worked with 25 to 30 township supervisors. It's all about her attitude.

"I've always been even-keeled... nothing rattles me," Martin says. "Besides, the township supervisors work on the roads, and they let me do my job."

And why wouldn't they, Krizinsky says. "Erma makes life easy for us. She's the backbone of the township." ♦

Do you have an incredible township secretary? Tell us

Townships certainly have their share of unsung heroes, and township secretaries are among them.

Therefore, to give these hard-working men and women the recognition they deserve, PSATS is introducing a new feature this month, the Secretary Hall of Fame. Secretaries must have at least 20 years of service to be eligible.

To nominate your secretary for the honor, contact Associate Editor Brenda Wilt at (717) 763-0930 or bwilt@psats.org. If submitting a written nomination, be sure to include your name, township and county, daytime telephone number, and email address.



PSATS hosts Fall Engineers Seminar

Members of the Township Engineers Association gathered at PSATS in October to learn the latest news and techniques from a variety of experts. The group meets twice a year – once in the spring and once in the fall – and, as usual, covered a range of topics, including road reclamation, PENNVEST and natural gas impact fee funding, standards for the Americans with Disabilities Act, and stormwater management.

Enhance Your Effectiveness as a Government Leader and
Earn a Nationally Recognized Credential



PA CPM
Certified Public Manager

Through the Pa. Certified Public Manager® you will develop advanced Leadership and Administration skills while increasing your marketability in the public sector.

Learn more at:
mville.us/cpm
or call 1-717-871-2014

Millersville University
SEIZE THE OPPORTUNITY

Millersville University is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Institution.
A member of the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education.

Millersville University is proud to be the only approved body of the Certified Public Manager® (CPM) in Pennsylvania.