

SECRETARY

HALLOFFAME

When **Diane DeJesus** applied for a part-time job with Bern Township in Berks County, she never envisioned it leading to a four-decade career in public service. And now, when most folks would be thinking about retiring, she can't imagine leaving.

Not Ready to Leave

Diane DeJesus
Bern Township, Berks County
41 years of service

BY JILL ERCOLINO / MANAGING EDITOR

Sometimes, life puts you in the right place at the right time.

For Diane DeJesus, that place was Bern Township in Berks County, a community she has served for 41 years.

"I love my job," the secretary-treasurer says, adding that retirement, which many would be considering at this point in their life, is the furthest thing from her mind. "I'm not ready to leave yet."

Riding the waves

DeJesus joined the township in 1980, the year Blondie was wailing "Call Me" on the radio, kids were picking up Rubik's Cubes for the first time, and the Iraq War was erupting overseas.

At the time, DeJesus and her husband, Tony, were focused on raising their young family and building a new home in the township. In the midst of this, a friend mentioned that the municipality was looking for part-time administrative help.



"I applied, got the position, and have been here ever since," DeJesus says.

It hasn't always been easy, though. She was only with the township a year when the full-time secretary-treasurer retired, leaving DeJesus with a new job and new responsibilities to learn.

"I didn't have a clue," she says, adding that with help from the former Department of Community Affairs and

Diane DeJesus has spent more than four decades helping Bern Township in Berks County run smoothly. The job presented a learning curve in the early years, particularly when the supervisors switched to computerized record-keeping. Despite the challenges, DeJesus says she loves her job and plans to stay as long as she is wanted.

a secretary in a neighboring township, she was able to figure out her duties and priorities. During this transition, DeJesus was thrown another curveball: The supervisors decided to switch from manual to computerized record-keeping.

"Things were changing," she says.

But as DeJesus has found, change is an inevitable part of public service. Township supervisors come and go, and so do challenges.

"We've had some rough times... secretaries are appointed so it can get scary at reorganization time and with board changes," she says, "but you just have to ride the waves."

For a number of years, DeJesus was the only office employee. Eventually, in 1998, the township brought Brian Potts, a former supervisor and planning commission member, on as manager. Since

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How PSATS has helped this Hall of Famer

When Diana DeJesus became the secretary for Bern Township, Berks County, she admits she had a lot to learn.

“I didn’t have a clue,” she says, adding that a go-to resource then and now has been PSATS. “I’ve called the Association for help, and always, always got an answer.”

then, the pair have worked side by side, overseeing the community’s daily operations, which include a road crew and police department. A part-time administrator is also part of the staff.

The employees work well together, she says. That, combined with a board of supervisors who also have mutual respect for each other and the staff, makes Bern Township an ideal place to spend a career — and many do, retiring with years of service.

“We all have such a good working relationship,” DeJesus says. “Everyone is friendly, and you just want to come to work. When people do leave, it’s because they’re retiring. We have very little turn-over, and that, to me, says a lot. I plan on staying as long as they’ll have me.” ♦

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