

# Retiring teachers recognized

C AND G NEWSPAPERS

By Thomas Franz 



Huron Elementary teacher Jeanne Forbes, center, is pictured with Huron Principal Kelly Shock and Chippewa Valley Schools Superintendent Ron Roberts. (Photo provided by Diane Blain)

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CLINTON TOWNSHIP/MACOMB TOWNSHIP — The work of three retiring teachers with more than 70 combined years of elementary school teaching experience in the Chippewa Valley Schools district was recognized during a Board of Education meeting Nov. 21.

Jeanne Forbes, Wesley Fishwick and Patricia O'Reilly were recognized by the board, as all of them plan to retire at the end of this school year.

Forbes, who started teaching in 1986, spent all of her 31 years in the district as a fourth-grade teacher at Huron Elementary.

"I like that age," Forbes said as to why she never moved grade levels or buildings. "They can do a lot. You can read really good books with them, they're pretty independent and I like the curriculum, so I stayed with it."

Forbes will be retiring in favor of obligations to her parents.

"I can't divide myself any more," Forbes said. "I've loved the children very much. It's very hard. I can't even imagine not seeing them everyday, so this is a very difficult decision for me."

Superintendent Ron Roberts used to teach fifth grade at Huron, and said during Forbes' recognition that she set a high bar for students moving on to his class.

"I would have all these kids come to me and say how much they loved Mrs. Forbes," Roberts said. "She has a wonderful laugh. The kids were lucky to have her."

O'Reilly will be departing the district after a 20-year teaching career. She started in the district full time in 1996 as a kindergarten teacher at Miami Elementary, but finished her career as a science specials teacher for 18 years at Cheyenne Elementary.

"I got a chance to play with science across all of the age levels. I could never make up my mind as to what grade level I would want to teach at, and with the science special, I could teach all grade levels," O'Reilly said.

O'Reilly became known for her rocket project with fifth-graders, and that is a tradition she will finish her career with this spring.

"I have to launch those rockets one more time. Those fifth-graders would never forgive me if I didn't stay long enough to launch the rockets," O'Reilly said.

O'Reilly learned of the rocket project while attending a NASA forum for teachers in Florida. She also attended an ecology course in Hawaii during her teaching career.

"Patty is one of my proudest hires," Roberts said. "What you see is a smile glued on her face, even in those times when it's really difficult to smile, that was Pat. She took that joy of learning right into that science classroom and instead of impacting 30 kids, she impacted almost 900 students at once."

For Fishwick, Roberts highlighted the 22-year district veteran's selflessness for moving into a new building for the last year of his career.

Fishwick spent most of his career at Cheyenne before moving to Fox Elementary so that a younger teacher at Cheyenne could retain her position.

"You will not meet a finer gentleman than him," Roberts said of Fishwick. "That's rare that someone would go into new territory and set up a classroom for one final year, and that's just the kind of person he is."

Roberts also complimented Fishwick's hobby as a global concert pianist. Fishwick showed off that talent during the opening ceremony at Cheyenne.

"The talent before these kids as an elementary teacher was just astounding," Roberts said. "I'm glad he's going out the way he wants to go out."

Two other longtime district employees who were not in attendance at the board meeting were also recognized for their efforts prior to retiring this year.

David Andrews, a teacher at Iroquois Middle School, will retire after 25 years of service, and Judith Colaluca will retire from a 24-year counseling career.



**ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

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