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## GTCC CO-WORKERS CHEER DECISION WHEN MATTHEWS DELAYS RETIREMENT

JAMESTOWN – Many long-term employees earn plaudits from co-workers when they retire but Marlene Matthews of Guilford Technical Community College is drawing praise because she didn't retire.

Matthews was scheduled to retire this month after nearly 20 years as an administrative assistant at GTCC but withdrew her retirement papers. "I learned that nobody could be hired when I left, so I decided to stay a while longer," she said. "It would have created a hardship on the people I work with. I want to know all is well before I leave," Matthews said.

Fellow workers depend on her to do a mass of paper work and other chores, and credit her with keeping the Transportation Division running in high gear. The division includes automotive systems technology, auto body repair, and heavy equipment and transportation technology.

A hiring freeze for state jobs prevents the college from immediately hiring a replacement for Matthews' position. It isn't known when the hiring freeze will be lifted.

"I hope I can retire by the end of June," Matthews said. "I'm hoping they possibly can hire someone by then."

Program supervisors and instructors were so delighted that she would still be doing their reports and "a million other things" that they nominated her for employee of the month at GTCC, an honor she won hands-down.

"This is a monumental step for someone who has been planning her retirement for over a year, and is indicative of the approach to all of her duties that I have observed since I began supervising her over 11 years ago," said Ed Frye, chair for the Transportation Division where Matthews works.

Frye said Matthews is "one of the most organized and efficient employees I have ever worked with."

Matthews said that she and husband John want to retire to Florida. Matthews, a native of Germany, met John Matthews when he was stationed overseas with the U.S. Army. "We eventually will move to Florida; not right away but sometime after I retire. We have a daughter and our only three grandsons down there," she said. They also have two other children. John Matthews works with the U.S. Postal Service in Greensboro.

"We've lived several places around the world, so I don't think much about traveling," she said. The Matthews settled in the United States in 1966, and

chose Greensboro as home “because it looked beautiful, like Germany,” Matthews said.

Instructor Josh Gilbert said Matthews “is the glue that keeps us together.” “She keeps flawless records, and always goes over and above to assist everyone,” said instructor Bill Yokley.

Jerry Cummings, department chair for the heavy equipment program, is impressed by the way Matthews not only helps co-workers but also is helpful to students. “Marlene is committed to the students in our program. She is always helping with continuing education classes....,” said Dewayne Washburn, an instructor in the automotive department.

“Her positive attitude spreads like fire throughout the transportation division,” said Jim Brown, program coordinator for the auto body repair program. Brown also is impressed by the way “she calmly handles distressed students, instructors and phone calls on a regular basis, leaving everyone with a good sense of being.”

Matthews’ interest in co-workers goes “beyond the job,” said Jeff Faircloth, department chair for automotive repair. “She makes sure every faculty member’s birthday is celebrated by purchasing a card, having other faculty members sign it, and having a cake for everyone to enjoy,” he said.

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