For Marsha Wright, commitment to land-grant mission is one constant in 35 year career

by LAURA NEFF-HENDERSON, APR

When Marsha Wright began working for Virginia Tech in 1979, the cost of a First Class postage stamp was 15 cents, a loaf of bread was $1.58, and a gallon of gas was 86 cents a gallon. The same year, McDonald’s introduced the Happy Meal and Michael Jackson released his first breakthrough album “Off the Wall.”

At Virginia Tech, William Edward Laverty was the university president, the $17.5 million complex to house the Virginia-Maryland College of Veterinary Medicine was still a year away for classes, and students were turning their attention to university policy, pushing for changes in the policy that prohibited the infusion of prescribing birth control pills.

A lot has changed since then, but one thing has stayed the same, according to Wright, the unit administrative assistant for Frederick County Cooperative Extension.

“Our programs have changed and the way we handle our reporting has changed, but our land-grant mission to serve others is still our guiding principle,” said Wright.

In 2011 she moved into the same position in Frederick County.

“The people I work with have always understood that there are times when you have to be a mom, and during the years that she was a single mom, she said. The work life balance has been vital to allowing her to manage her personal and work life, especially when we have support staff shortages or an extra need and has been selected to represent our district on committees at the state level,” said Cindy Gochouer, district administrative assistant for the Virginia Cooperative Extension Northern District Office.

“Marsha has always been willing to help. She regularly volunteers to help our other counties or the district when we have support staff shortages or an extra need and has been selected to represent our district on committees at the state level,” said Cindy Gochouer.

“The people are the best part of my job,” said Wright. “I’ve been very fortunate to work with great people and understanding bosses in both offices I’ve been in.”

“Wright also enjoys reading, crocheting, and cross stitching and finds joy in making scarfs and other items for her grandchildren.”

The Extraordinary Employee series highlights the achievements of Virginia Tech employees who go above and beyond, making a difference in the lives of others on campus and in the community.

Marsha Wright, an administrative assistant in the Frederick County office of Virginia Cooperative Extension works tirelessly to support all of her Extension colleagues in surrounding counties. She is seen here receiving the 2013 College of Agriculture and Life Sciences Employee of the Month award from her supervisor, Mark Surphin, associate Extension agent, Agriculture and Natural Resources, Horticulture and unit coordinator (Frederick).

In her free time, Wright and her husband, Peanut, are active in their community. He coached the local Little League baseball and softball team and the couple has been fundraising for the past three years to raise money and materials to install lights on a baseball field in Berryville, Virginia.

Marsha has assisted with the organization of several dinners and actions, recruited community and business support, and performed financial and clerical activities to ensure this endeavor is a success.

She has also been involved with the Cub Scouts and Relay for Life and helps with the Clarke County Kiwanis Club’s annual casino night fundraiser.

In her free time, Wright and her husband, Peanut, are active in their community. He coached the local Little League baseball and softball team and the couple has been fundraising for the past three years to raise money and materials to install lights on a baseball field in Berryville, Virginia.

Marsha has assisted with the organization of several dinners and actions, recruited community and business support, and performed financial and clerical activities to ensure this endeavor is a success.

She has also been involved with the Cub Scouts and Relay for Life and helps with the Clarke County Kiwanis Club’s annual casino night fundraiser.

The commitment to serve others is a value the Wights have instilled in their children as well. Together, the couple has five children—all boys who are grown, and live in the area. Three of their children work in public service positions. One is a firefighter, one is a fire marshal, and one is a high school history teacher.

Wright also enjoys reading, crocheting, and cross stitching and finds joy in making scarves and other items for her grandchildren.

She plans to continue working as long as she enjoys the job and is healthy enough to do so.

First published May, 2015.
www.ext.vt.edu/extraordinary_employees/2015/marsha-wright/

Laura Neff-Henderson, APR, is the employee communications manager at Virginia Tech