

MEET PTS



LINDA SMITH TO RETIRE FROM PTS AFTER 50 YEARS

Who among us can imagine Pittsburgh Seminary without thinking of Linda Smith—the always smiling, all-things-PTS-knowing presence at the President’s Office for the last five decades? Surely no member of our Seminary’s community has earned a more well-deserved retirement than Linda, who opens this new chapter in her life.

Linda was to several presidents what Radar was to Colonel Potter on M.A.S.H.—always thinking of it before we could, and then getting it done as the idea was just forming in our minds. But most of all we saw her as a precious colleague and friend. There will never be another one like her.

A native Pittsburgher, Linda graduated from Penn Hills High School and immediately began working at the University of Pittsburgh as secretary to the dean of men. “I worked on the eighth floor of the Cathedral of Learning during the day, took night classes at Pitt, and started earning my certificate for secretarial work from Duff’s Business Institute [now Everest Institute] downtown,” Linda recalls. It was during that time that she met and married Darwin, then a pharmacology student at Pitt. After he graduated, Linda and Darwin moved to St. Louis, Mo., for Darwin’s chiropractic program, and for the next four years Linda worked as secretary to the director of personnel for Rexall Drug and Chemical Company. “I loved St. Louis,” says Linda, “especially the shorter winters! But we had history and family back in Pittsburgh,” so “home” they came after Darwin completed his degree.

And on Feb. 26, 1968, Pittsburgh Seminary started becoming Linda’s professional home. The Rev. Dr. Donald G. Miller was serving as president, soon to be followed by the Rev. Dr. William Kadel, and Linda began working just down the hall as secretary to then business manager John Logan. After a dozen years and the retirement of President Kadel, she became secretary to Interim President Dr. Ronald V. Wells. In that role, Linda continued to provide vital administrative support through the tenures of the next two, long-serving presidents—the Rev. Drs. C. Samuel Calian (25 years) and William J. Carl III (10 years)—and for another three years into the current presidency of the Rev. Dr. David Esterline.

“When I first started at the Seminary,” Linda recalls, “the John Knox Room was our chapel—Hicks Memorial Chapel hadn’t yet been built, nor had Anderson or McMillan halls. We hadn’t bought Highlander, and Fischer Hall hadn’t yet been replaced by Calian Hall. And of course not just the students but also the faculty and staff have turned over many times in the last 50 years.” So needless to say, Linda Smith is Pittsburgh Seminary’s “institutional memory.”

No one knows that better than President Emeritus Sam Calian and his wife, Doris. “Doris and I worked with Linda in our roles as President and First Lady at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary from 1981 to 2006. What a blessing Linda was to us both in fulfilling our many responsibilities to advance the Seminary’s educational mission and ministry. May God continue to bless PTS with more Linda Smiths!” he says. Fellow former president Bill Carl agrees. “If there were ever such a thing as an institution’s ‘human archives,’ Linda Smith would be a classic example of that for Pittsburgh Seminary. Linda was to several presidents what Radar was to Colonel Potter on M.A.S.H.—always thinking of it before we could, and then getting it done as the idea was just forming in our minds. But most of all we saw her as a precious colleague and friend. There will never be another one like her.”

“If you know Linda at all,” says current President David Esterline, “you know that she is hardly replaceable. I am honored to be the fourth president under whom she has served at Pittsburgh Seminary. I have always found her, in everything she does, to be thoughtful and gracious, wise and caring. To say that I will miss Linda is a great understatement!”

Linda plans to return regularly to PTS to help out as a volunteer—“unless,” she says, “there happens to be a blizzard!”

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