

Farewell To A Familiar Face



For 22 years, Connie Simon greeted the Divine Word College community and visitors as the front-desk receptionist. It was her smiling face that they came to know, but at the end of May, Connie retired, leaving the chair behind the glass panel empty all summer.

“Everyone who came to the front office was important to her,” said Marlene Decker, director of the college’s business office and Connie’s direct supervisor for the entire time she

worked at DWC. “Our office has not been the same since Connie left in May. She had a big smile for everyone and always gave DWC her best. We worked well together and there were many happy, enjoyable times in the office.”

Connie wrapped up her time at the college a few days earlier than expected because school administrators were encouraging faculty and staff to work from home in the spring if they were able, due to the COVID-19 health crisis. It’s not exactly how Connie expected to start her retirement, but she’s not complaining. “It could be a lot worse. I’m safe and I’m healthy and that’s all that counts,” she said. Since then, Connie said she’s been enjoying retirement, even though she’s primarily staying home to reduce her exposure to others. In the mornings, you might see

her riding her three-wheel bike around town or water walking at her friend’s pool while the one at the college is closed.

Connie was quick to note that she doesn’t miss hearing her alarm each morning, but said she does miss chatting with the friends she made on the staff over the years. Looking back, it’s those relationships and the ones she built with students that she cherishes most. Even today, Connie keeps in touch with several former students who she bonded with years ago while they were studying at DWC. “Connie was a dedicated and caring employee who was pleasant to work with,” Marlene said. “She was so patient with the students, faculty and staff. Connie was the right person to have at the front counter.”

MARY AROUND THE WORLD



Just as the student body at Divine Word College is always changing, so is the space where students live and learn. This summer, crews worked to reorganize chapels on campus to celebrate the principle ethnic communities represented at the college, honor the Blessed Mother and recognize the missionary reach of the Society of the Divine Word.



The space formerly known as “the crypt” in the basement has been transformed and renamed the Mother of Asia Chapel. The change was made possible in large part because of the generosity of the Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary (BVM), who gifted the college with an altar and other liturgical furniture. The Dubuque sisters also contributed statues, numerous crucifixes and chairs that will be used in the smaller chapels that surround the larger one. The space is also dedicated as Harold Rigney SVD Assembly Hall.



Nearby is the newly finished Reina de las Americas or Queen of the Americas Chapel. It includes small images of Mary, as well as a large tapestry of Our Lady of Guadalupe. The altar,

ambo and chair were gifts from the Franciscan Sisters. The tapestry and chairs were gifts from the BVM Sisters. On the second floor, the space formerly known as the Guadalupe Chapel is now known as La Mère du Verbe or Mother of the Word Chapel. With a growing Afro-Haitian-American community at the college, this space will honor St. Josephine Bakhita and other African and African-American saints.

