

Ty Ankrom's Here's What I Think ...

When Lydia Rittinger completed Pickaway-Ross' high skills stenography program in 1981, she knew she needed a job with benefits.

But when she joined the Pickaway County Board of Education – now the Pickaway County Educational Service Center – she probably didn't expect she'd be there 30 years later.

"I needed a job to help support my family, but I didn't expect to find a career," said Lydia, an administrative assistant at the ESC.

She started as a part-time employee working three days a week in the basement cleaning 16-millimeter films.



Lydia Rittinger received a Golden Apple last month to recognize her 30 years in education, all of it spent at the ESC.



At the time, said Treasurer Shannon Clark, "We were housed in an old brick house on Franklin Street in Circleville. The basement was just that, a basement that we called the dungeon. It was kind of dark and gloomy. But someone had to take care of all those big film reels."

Lydia toiled away in the basement for about five years. One day, Lydia recalls, two secretaries resigned and she was offered a full-time job.

In her current role, she compiles the monthly substitute teacher list, performs background checks and fingerprinting of prospective employees.

She's also a people person, always willing to help those who need a license as a teacher or aide.

The Ohio Department of Education now requires that everything for licensure be submitted online. I have seen Lydia sit down with those who are not tech savvy and walk them through the process.

"I enjoy helping people," Lydia said.

In her 30 years at the ESC,



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technology and superintendents have changed, but Lydia said growth in services has been among the bigger changes.

"Our office has grown by adding numerous programs and staff members and by offering so many more services to the city and local school districts and to all the children of Pickaway County. We not only work with the city and local districts by providing some related services, but also Brooks Yates, Pickaway-Ross, PICCA Head Start, Early Head Start, Help Me Grow and Family & Children First Council.

"I have always enjoyed my job, the changes, challenges and successes, and plan to continue working."

Ty Ankrom is the superintendent of the Pickaway County Educational Service Center. He can be reached at ty.ankrom@pickawayesc.org.