

GOING FULL CIRCLE

Few people in life have accomplished what Dr. Joy Russell has successfully achieved. Dr. Russell graduated from Eastern Illinois University in 1976 with a bachelor's degree and later returned to complete her master's degree in 1978. She furthered her education by obtaining her PhD in 2006 from Indiana State University. All her degrees were focused in the field of education. Reading Dr. Russell's list of accomplishments, publications, grant awards, presentations, and honors is a long scroll of successes. Most recently, she received the Distinguished Department Chair Leadership Award.

Throughout Dr. Russell's career, the doors that opened for work opportunities were varied and helped her gain the valuable experience that made her an outstanding educational leader:

- 1976-77 Harlem School District, Olson Park School team teaching in a cross-categorical position that led to her assignment of developing a Special Education self-contained classroom
- 1977-78 Served as the Graduate Assistant in the EC/ELE/MLE Department Reading Center
- 1978-80 Director for the Arcola Learning Disability Resource Room
- 1980-87 K-6 Developed and taught in the Learning Resource Room at Monroe Elementary, Casey, IL
- 1987-94 Eastern Illinois Area of Special Education(EIASE) as Special Coordinator
- 1994-2003 Director of Staff Development at the Educational Service Center
- 2003-2005 Project Director at Eastern Illinois University
- 1985-2007 Assistant Professor at Eastern Illinois University; 2004-2007 Special Education Department

In 2007, Dr. Russell was appointed to the EC/ELE/MLE Department Chair position; the very department where she began her formal college education, thus "***going full circle.***"

Growing up in the suburbs of Chicago, the daughter of a dairyman and a housewife, Dr. Russell knew she wanted to be a teacher at an early age. As an

only child, she 'played school' with her dolls by lining them up in rows and giving them a complete education. These were possibly the smartest dolls in all of Chicago.

Having dedicated herself to the field of education for 37 years, Dr. Russell has seen numerous changes at both the local and state level. However, when asked about her vision for the future of education she said, "I am excited about the direction of where education is going and the dedication of our students. The students in the EC/ELE/MLE Department are quality candidates. They have the heart and drive to be excellent teachers and future leaders."

For the EC/ELE/MLE staff, the retirement announcement of Dr. Joy Russell, effective December 2014, came as a complete shock. She will be greatly missed. We congratulate Dr. Russell on her retirement; the end of an era and the start of a whole new chapter.

Her repertoire of carefully selected quotes used for faculty meetings and emails has been her trademark. Therefore, it is only fitting to end this article with a quote,

"Have you ever been out for a late autumn walk in the closing part of the afternoon, and suddenly looked up to realize that the leaves have practically all gone? You hadn't realized it. And you notice that the sun has set already, the day gone before you knew it — and with that a cold wind blows across the landscape. That's retirement". ~Stephen Leacock

