

# --2019 SNA of SC Member of the Year--

## Nancy Knight

### serves LCSD 55 for 50 years



*From left are Robby Bell, Nancy Knight and Superintendent Dr. Stephen Peters.*

The Human Resource Department at Laurens County School District 55 (LCSD 55) spends most of their summer reading applications and interviewing the most qualified candidates for positions in LCSD 55.

When hiring a new staff member, one quality stands above all others, which is a dedication to making a difference in students' lives. There are many in LCSD 55 who fit that description. Nancy Knight, food service manager at Hickory Tavern Elementary/Middle School, truly exemplifies this standard. She has been serving others in LCSD 55 since 1969. She has probably served your grandparents, your parents, and is

currently serving your kids or grandkids meals each day.

Knight, an alumna of Gray Court-Owings (GCO), she talked about her time as a student including participating in basketball and chorus. Her favorite memory of school, however, was when her fifth-grade teacher made students learn a Bible verse to each letter of the alphabet. Knight was able to recall a lot of the verses associated with the alphabet, but her favorite was C: "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28). Knight's graduating class at GCO had 21 people receiving diplomas.

Knight's work resume includes 18 years on a paper route, time at the local shirt plant, and service as a substitute teacher for Hickory Tavern (HT) (receiving a \$1.25 per hour) before landing a full-time position at HT as a food service operator. After nine years of service at HT, Knight moved to Sanders Middle School (SMS) at the request of then Superintendent John M. Liston (1979-88) to help facilitate the growing needs of SMS. However, HT was home, so Knight moved back to the school after a year at SMS when she promoted to food service manager. Knight has been at HT for the last 36 years.

When asked about the changes Knight has seen in her field, she talked about the addition of serving breakfast, three options for entrees during lunch, and of course, her favorite, free lunch. "It's a wonderful thing for the students and families. There was a time when students came to the lunch line hungry but couldn't afford to pay, those were tough days," said Knight.

Every day there is a routine that most food service managers go through. It usually involves getting to the school before the sun comes up, preparing the day's meals, cleaning and prepping, taking inventory, and making sure students are safe while coming through the breakfast and lunch line. Thanks to a computer service it has become easier to serve students safely with dietary needs. With an increase in the recognition of student health issues (particularly allergies), Knight said, "We do everything possible to keep these students safe while preparing their meals."

Knight has three daughters who have all served LCSD 55 at some point in their lives, including Wanda Knight who is currently the Director of Student Nutrition Services for LCSD 55. Knight's hobbies during her off time in the summer include canning, sewing, and painting, but she enjoys hosting Sunday family meals at her house the most. Knight also attends the Annual National Conference for School Nutrition each year to earn recertification and learn more about her profession. Knight has had the opportunity to travel all over the United States through her work in food services and she is grateful for all the opportunities she has had.

After 50 years of working with different people, Knight was asked what her coworkers would say about her. Her response, "They already told me — they love me!" Knight will be back for her 51st year as she adds serving the Class of 2032 (this year's kindergarten class) to her impressive service record.

Submitted by Ed Murray

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