

“THE VILLAGE CLERK” Shirley Stockman

Served from 1965 to 2023

In the heart of every village dwells an unspoken rhythm, the pattern of daily life kept steady by those who serve not for glory but for the common good. Among these guardians of tradition, the Village Clerk stands as a quiet sentinel, preserving the stories of neighbors, and ensuring that the business of community runs as true as the clock in the town square. Today, we gather our thoughts and memories to honor the legacy of “the Previous Village Clerk” who served with devotion for **58 years** that enriched our shared lives in ways both visible and unseen.

From the earliest days Shirley was more than a keeper of minutes and records. She was the gentle voice behind the counter, and sometimes the commanding voice, the steady hand guiding new residents through the necessary paperwork, and the attentive ear listening to the concerns of generations. For years, Shirley worked before dawn, unlocking the doors to office in her home as morning light crept over the rooftops. With methodical care, she sorted the week’s correspondence, readied the agenda for Village Board meetings, and greeted each visitor with warmth and quiet dignity.

Her desk was in her kitchen from which the tapestry of village life was observed, each thread noted and cherished. Births, marriages, property deeds, and the occasional dispute—all passed through her hands, each detail meticulously recorded for posterity. In times of celebration, she ensured that papers were filed so festivities could proceed without hindrance. In times of trouble, she was a pillar of calm, helping neighbors navigate bureaucracy with patience and empathy.

What sets apart **a truly great clerk** is not merely their ability to keep things organized, but the integrity with which they approach their work. She embodied this virtue. Her words were trusted; her judgement was respected. She navigated the fine balance between law and mercy, always seeking a solution that honored both the letter and the spirit of our shared rules. When tempers flared at Village meetings, Shirley’s gentle suggestion or discreet note often steered the conversation back to harmony. Her impartiality was a gift, allowing all voices to be heard, while anchoring decisions in fairness and respect.

The documents preserved by Shirley are more than dry records—they are the storybook of the village. Through careful archiving, she ensured that every moment, big and small, was saved for tomorrow’s generations. The notes she kept provide a window into how our community has grown and changed, how new traditions emerge, and old ones are remembered. Her handwriting—sometimes neat, sometimes hurried—reminds us that history is not made by chance, but by the daily choices of those who care.

As we look through these archives, we find not only the facts, but the quiet marks of compassion—a note penciled in the margin to help a neighbor remember a deadline, a phone number circled for a family struggling to find assistance. Shirley’s touch is present on each page, a testament to her commitment to the welfare of all.

Perhaps the greatest memorial we can offer is not to recount every policy Shirley oversaw, nor every list she compiled, but to remember the kindness that infused her with every action. As “the Village Clerk”,

she understood that the heart of the village was not the buildings or bylaws, but the people themselves. Whether helping elders fill out forms, guiding young couples through the maze of new-home ownership, or gently encouraging volunteers who wished to serve, she offered time and wisdom freely.

Neighbors remember Shirley's laughter, soft but genuine. Children recall being greeted with sweets after their first trip to her makeshift office. Newcomers still speak of the welcome they received—an introduction to village customs, a map drawn by hand, a list of local festivities. In every interaction, Shirley as the clerk fostered belonging and trust.

Now, as we reflect on her passing, we realize how much of our village's stability and spirit rests on the foundation that she built. The systems that she refined continue to help us; the records she kept remain a resource for all; the kindness she showed sets a standard for those who follow.

Her influence is seen in the way meetings are conducted, the thoroughness with which policies are reviewed, and in the mutual respect that defines our gatherings. Shirley's legacy endures not in grand monuments, but in the gentle customs and shared values that make our community whole.

To commemorate a person of such quiet strength, we might consider a plaque in the village hall, bearing their name and the years of their service, which the Village Hall is dedicated to her, **“The Shirley Stockman Conference Center”**. Yet perhaps the truest memorial is found in our daily actions—when we greet each other with patience, when we take the time to explain a process to a newcomer, when we choose fairness over expediency, we carry forward the spirit of **“The Village Clerk”**, Shirley Stockman.

Let us also remember to share her story with those who were not fortunate enough to know her. Let the children hear of the clerk who saved the village's history, who welcomed all, and who never forgot a birthday. Let neighbors pause, now and then, to recall the sound of her voice and the reliability of her presence.

Though her chair has another person in it, *not likely to ever fill her shoes*, Shirley's legacy remains deeply woven into the fabric of village life. Her dedication, kindness, and unwavering integrity have touched each of us and will continue to guide our steps for generations to come. In remembering Shirley, we reaffirm our commitment to the values she championed, ensuring that the village remains a place of trust, hospitality, and enduring community.

May this memorial stand not only as a tribute to **Shirley Stockman**, but as a call to all who serve: to do so with heart, with humility, and with hope.