

The guy to get it done: Jersey custodian retires after four decades

by Cory Davenport, Contributing Writer
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JERSEYVILLE - After more than four decades of working in the **Jersey Community Unit School District**, **Randy Dilks** is retiring.

Dilks began working at the district while he was attending school there. His close friend and former boss, **Chris Skinner**, said Dilks was part of a co-op work program through the high school. During that time, he worked partially as a custodian while attending classes. Soon after his graduation, Dilks began working at **East Elementary School** in

Jerseyville after one of the custodians took sick leave. He later moved to the high school, where he has worked ever since.

Skinner said Dilks was beloved by students and staff alike during his time at the district.

"Anything you needed done at the school, Randy could do it," Skinner said. "The kids all knew him as Randy. If they had a problem, they could go to Randy to get it fixed."

In his 43 years in the district, Dilks saw new additions to the old high school building as well as the complete construction of the current building. Skinner said Dilks knew "every inch of that building" and knew where to find everything in it.

This year was the first year school started without Dilks since Skinner started teaching history 28 years ago. Dilks recently underwent knee replacement surgery and has been on sick leave since summer. Skinner said Dilks decided to go ahead and retire instead of returning to the district.

"We started the school year without him for the first time in 28 years," Skinner said. "I know he'll be staying busy. He always stays busy."

Skinner said Dilks will remain active on assisting with the girls' softball team and maybe even use some of his retirement free time to "work on his golf swing."

Overall, Skinner said Dilks's presence would be missed in the halls of the high school. Skinner said Dilks had a rare quality he believes is missing in today's world - the ability to treat everyone as an equal.

"It never mattered if someone was a millionaire or homeless, Randy would treat them the same," Skinner said. "He would treat them nicely and polite. He is the kind of person that would give you the shirt off his back."

Skinner said Dilks's tenure at the school may be celebrated by a few small events so students and staff have a chance to wish him well.