

With the processing of this year's employee retirements, FMTC is on the verge of losing over 150 years of combined staff experience. By any measure, that is a lot of institutional knowledge walking out the door! Last year's retirements also came close to that number.

Schools tend to become second families for many of those who work in them, especially those which don't have much employee turnover. The departure of this year's crop of retirees, as well as those of the last few years, is a big loss for our school family. We will miss them, but we know that their impact here will be felt for many years to come.

FMTC has long prided itself on not only the quality of its staff, but on their commitment and loyalty to the school. This has resulted for a long time in a very experienced, knowledgeable, and veteran staff, and we have benefited from that in many ways. As we say goodbye the retirees of the past few years (and their decades of knowledge), it is comforting to know that their positions are being taken up by capable, dedicated, energetic, and younger staff members who are up to the challenge of carrying on the traditions of excellence which have been established by our veteran staff members.

We will miss you all...but you will always be a part of our school!

RETIREMENT

PLEASE JOIN US FOR A RETIREMENT RECEPTION

Help us celebrate over 150 years of service at Fort Myers Technical College.

TUESDAY, MAY 31, 2016 FROM 4-6 P.M. — \$15 PER PERSON

Riverside Community Center • 3061 E Riverside Drive • Fort Myers, FL 33916

Please RSVP to Debbie Krouse: deborahLK@leeschools.net

(239) 334-4544 ext. 204

GARY CHRISTIANO

RON ELLIS

BOBBIE ELLYATT

VAN FRANEY

STEVE FRIEBEL

BILL MCCORMICK

MIKE REMY

Bill McCormick joined Lee County High Tech Center Central in 2001 as the Assistant Director of Operations and Finance. Immediately after he started he had to oversee a 4-year, \$11 million dollar campus renovation. The remodel included infrastructure, mechanical, lighting, electrical, air-conditioning, and networking.

In 2009, Bill was appointed Director of the school. He has directed the establishment of 5 new instructional programs, including the first turbine generator maintenance program in the state of Florida; overseen a 35% increase in enrollment; directed the first COE-accredited Extension Campus and Instructional Service Center in the region; and initiated the first offering of a practical nursing program at a remote rural community. Bill also initiated the school-wide graduation ceremony which continues to this day.

High Tech Central became Fort Myers Institute of Technology under Bill's direction, and he led the initiative to rename the school to Fort Myers Technical College in 2015.

Bill established post-secondary technical colleges as a separate and unified organization in the school district and became the Senior Director of Technical Colleges in 2014.

Bill currently serves on the following professional organizations:

- Board Member, Florida Association of Career & Technical Education.
- President, Leadership Division, Florida Association of Career & Technical Education.
- President, Post-secondary Division, Florida Association of Career & Technical Education.
- Member, State of Florida Workforce Funding Steering Committee, Florida Department of Education.
- Member, Legislative Platform Steering Committee, Florida Public Technical Colleges/Centers.

Before coming to The School District of Lee County in 1996, Bill completed a successful career as a commissioned officer in the United States Army.

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BILL MCCORMICK





GARY CHRISTIANO

Gary Christiano's history at FMTC began right after he finished high school and enrolled in the Drafting program. He learned to draft the 'old-fashioned' way by hand producing drawings on drafting tables. After completing the program in 1977, he was hired by Lonestar Pinellas, a

introduced students to building information modeling (BIM) using Revit. "Being a teacher has given more to me than I could ever give to my students," says Gary.

Gary and his wife, Karon, are the parents of four grown children, three of whom completed programs at FMTC. Olivia is a graduate of the Practical Nursing program and is employed as an LPN with the Lee County Sheriff's Office. She will be pursuing her RN degree this fall at Florida SouthWestern State College. Kelly is a graduate of the Cosmetology program and is employed as a manager at Ulta. Karyn Marie is a graduate of the Nursing Assistant program and is employed by a local dermatologist as a MOHS surgical lab technician. Justin is a graduate of Florida Gulf Coast University and is a manager for SRBI, a company that specializes in statistical data surveys.

Gary's passions are home remodeling and auto restoration. He is currently remodeling his own home and has several auto painting projects lined up. He will continue architectural design on the side as time allows.

Gary has been looking forward to retirement; he and Karon will be cruising Alaska this summer and are planning future trips to the Grand Canyon, Panama Canal, and more.

manufacturer of roof trusses. He then went to work for a local architect for a few years before starting a 5-year career at Lee County Electric Cooperative.

In 1986, Mr. Gerald Benion, his Drafting teacher at FMTC, retired and encouraged Gary to apply for his position. So began a 30 year career. Along the way, Gary had to keep up with major changes in industry, boards were phased out in 1995 and computer-aided drafting (CAD) was phased in. Eventually he

Ron Ellis, Automotive Service Technology instructor, grew up in Miami and was always around engines. He was intrigued by their inner workings from a very young age and wanted to learn how to build one himself. By the time he was 5 years old, he would spend days watching his father, a mechanic, repair all kinds of engines. His father taught him about automobiles and gave him the opportunity to absorb knowledge by watching and trying things on his own. Ron was persistent; if he didn't get it running the first time, he did it over and over until it ran perfectly. Little did he know this would be the training he needed for a lifelong career.

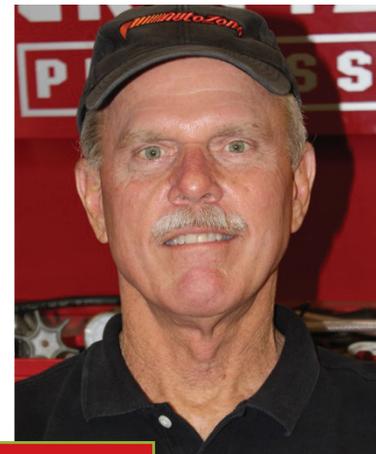
While Ron was still young, his father decided to change careers and become a pilot. Within a couple years, he became a licensed pilot and was flying commercial airplanes.

The senior Mr. Ellis eventually retired as a captain of a 747 with a major airline. He also passed on his love of flying to his son who began taking over the controls when he was 10 and became a licensed pilot at 18.

After high school, Ron worked as an ironworker for 7 years but was always working on cars on the side. Eventually he opened his own auto repair shop in Miami. In 1988 he moved to Fort Myers and began his career in education teaching auto mechanics at a high school in Immokalee. In 2002, he responded to a vacancy at Fort Myers Technical College and was hired a few days later. Ron has expanded the Automotive Service Technology program's focus on engine performance. He has thoroughly enjoyed his 14 years teaching at FMTC and sharing his

passion with others.

Ron will continue working in his own shop where he builds race cars, restores classic cars, repairs boats, jet



RON ELLIS

skis, and Harley's – if it has an engine, he'll work on it! He looks forward to having more time to enjoy life and spending quality time with his son, Ron, and daughter, Kelly. And someday soon he will have a new plane in the hanger in his backyard.

who am i?



Bobbie Ellyatt, Clerk-Typist, moved to Florida in 1999 after living most of her life in a very small town in Ohio. She went to work at Sims Portex, a manufacturing company; a couple of years later the company was sold and moved its operations to Mexico. The North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) provided her the opportunity to go back to school to learn a new profession. Bobbie enrolled in the Administrative Assistant program with Ms. Doritha Isaac as her teacher. At the age of 48, Bobbie was terrified to go back to school; she had no self-confidence and didn't think she was going to be able to complete the program. But she stuck with it, excelled in class, and gained confidence – it ended up being a wonderful experience and completely turned her life around. She was hired as a para-professional at FMTC before she even completed the program. She went

on to become the receptionist and later moved into the clerk-typist position. Bobbie is always willing to take on any project and has been the first point of contact for future students for many years. Ms. Isaac had each student prepare a 5-year plan and Bobbie is happy to report that almost everything in her plan has come to fruition.

Bobbie will be retiring on July 29th; her husband, Ted, will retire January 1, 2017. They already have a retirement home in Lake Havasu City, Arizona. As soon as they sell their home in Fort Myers, they will move there full-time.

Bobbie and Ted have a bucket list including travel and spending more time with son Eric in Sidney, Ohio; daughter Darla in Mt. Airy, North Carolina; step-daughter Janice in Bremerton, Washington; and their five grandchildren.



BOBBIE ELLYATT



VAN FRANNEY

Van Franey, Plumbing Technology instructor, grew up in Kentucky as one of 9 children. During most

of his childhood, the family of 11 lived in an 1,100 sq. ft. home with only one bathroom. Van started working part-time when he was 14 cutting tobacco and hauling hay. At 16, he worked as a bellman and at a grocery store. During his senior year of high school, he started cleaning plumbing trucks. Eventually he started riding on the trucks as a plumber's helper. When a plumber suddenly quit, he was given the opportunity to fill the position. By 24, he had a master plumber's license.

In 1975, he moved to Fort Myers and the next year heard that Lee Vo-Tech was going to start a Plumbing Technology program. He applied for the position, was hired, and had to get busy building the program from scratch. Today, 39 years later, Van has taught over 700 students, gone through 5 school names, and worked under 4 directors. Several of his former students own local plumbing businesses and five currently work in the

Maintenance Department at the School District.

In 2000, Van initiated a campus beautification project. He and his students removed overgrown trees and Van helped raise money for the purchase of new landscaping. His students installed and have maintained a campus-wide irrigation system.

Both of Van's children live in the area – Katie is a pharmacist and James is a student at Florida Gulf Coast University. He is also the proud grandfather of three young granddaughters.

Van has owned a plumbing business since 1979 (and yes, he has more than one bathroom in his home!); his 'retirement' plans include expanding the business. He expects to spend more time in Kentucky with his large extended family and following up with business ventures there. Van is also looking forward to spending a lot more time on the golf course!

(Bill McCormick—continued from cover)

His overseas assignments included Germany, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and for a brief time, Iraq. His last assignment with the Department of Defense was as Assistant Professor of Public Affairs at the Defense Information School at Fort Meade, Maryland.

Bill holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Communications from the University of Central Florida, and a Master of Science degree in Public Administration from Central Michigan University.

Bill's wife, Jackie, a principal at Community School of Naples, plans on retiring in the near future. Bill and Jackie are the parents of four grown sons. Their retirement plans include traveling across the country to visit the sons who live in Austin, Texas; Phoenix, Arizona; Detroit, Michigan; and Boston, Massachusetts.

Their first adventure is a trip to Detroit, Michigan, where they'll visit family and spend about a month exploring the Upper Peninsula and the Great Lakes region.



STEVE FRIEBEL

Steve Friebel, Technology Specialist, was born in November 1953 in Appleton, Wisconsin. He attended parochial school there until his family moved to Orlando, Florida, for part of Steve's high school career. He and his family returned to Wisconsin where he graduated from Kimberly High in 1971.

Steve enlisted in the US Navy straight out of high school and went through boot camp at Great Lakes Naval Station. His singing voice earned

him the distinction of teaching the Navy's theme song "Anchors Aweigh" to all the new recruits. He was stationed in the Navy at Newport, Rhode Island, and at the Naval Hospital in Portsmouth, Virginia, where he was the Chief Neurosurgical Operating Room Technician. He also trained new O.R. Technicians and assisted the surgeons during all types of surgeries. After his 4 years of service in the Navy, Steve attended Old Dominion University in Norfolk, Virginia, and earned his Bachelor's degree in secondary education Industrial Arts. He returned to Wisconsin, where he worked as an electrician in the country's largest fire truck assembly plant and then worked as a copy machine repair technician for five more years.

Steve ventured into the field of education after meeting his future wife Karen, who was then and still is working as a school psychologist. The sunny climate of Florida called Steve and Karen to leave Wisconsin and move to Lee County. Steve's first teaching job was at North Fort Myers High where he taught Industrial Arts (aka "shop") for 4 years from 1988-1992. He transferred to Lee Middle School where he taught Technology Education for 6 years. This was the start of his career in computer technology. Steve's computer expertise has been mostly self-taught. He moved on to the position of Tech Ed teacher at Diplomat Middle for the next 7 years. He also taught

evening adult computer classes for several years through Lee County's Adult and Community Education program. In fall 2005 he left the classroom for his first assignment as Technology Specialist at Michigan International Academy for 3 years. He also spent a year at Lee Middle as the Credit Retrieval Teacher and assisted with the school's technology needs before moving for one year to Treeline Elementary as the computer lab "specials" teacher. In fall 2010, Steve finally got his dream job when he was hired by Bill McCormick to be the Technology Specialist at what was then called High Tech Central, now known as Fort Myers Technical College. FMTC has been Steve's favorite place to work. He will miss the people he has worked with over the last 6 years of his career.

Steve and Karen both will be retiring at the end of 2015-16. Steve has spent the last 28 years and Karen has spent the last 40 years in education. As retirees they hope to spend time visiting their 4 grown kids and 8 grandkids, take some road trips, do some work, and relax at home in Matlacha. Eventually the couple plans to move to The Villages, Florida, where Steve will probably be found out on the golf course, riding around in the golf cart, or exploring on his trusty Segway.

Mike Remy, Welding Technology instructor, participated in the Diversified Cooperative Education program while a high school student in Ohio. Since there wasn't a welding program at his school, he learned the profession on the job. His first job was at Caretree Systems, Inc. in Ohio where he earned \$1.75 per hour (he quickly doubled his salary to \$3.50 per hour)!

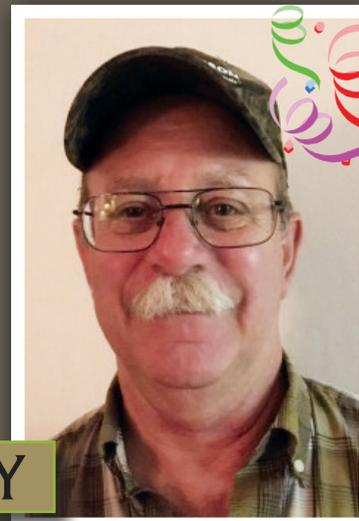
After moving to Fort Myers in 1979 he worked as a welder for Modern Air Conditioning before applying for a teaching position at Lee Vo-Tech in 1982. Mike has seen many changes in industry: welding units have become smaller, more efficient, and incorporate new technologies. Today's students must now learn not only how to weld but also computer technology used in the field. Mike has helped his program grow into a two teacher program with a student waiting list.

Mike keeps in touch with his graduates and is very proud of all of their successes. Many of the students who completed the welding program are now employers who have hired other students. One example is Eric Wirgin who owns FabWorx in Cape Coral and now employs both a graduate and a current student.

Mike met his wife Mona, the data processor at Lee Vo-Tech; they recently celebrated their 31st anniversary. Mike and Mona are the parents of two grown children and three grandchildren – Jacob, Trevor, and Allie Rose who was born just a few weeks ago on Mother's Day. Son Shane graduated from the Fire Fighter/Emergency Medical Technician program at the Southwest Florida Public Service Academy and is

employed by the Fort Myers Fire Department. Daughter Lindsey completed the Practical Nursing program at FMTC and now works as an LPN with Lee Memorial Health Systems. Both children also graduated from Lee Tech Tots (now FMTC Tech Tots).

Mona is beating Mike to retirement by a few weeks; she retires on May 31st after working for the School District for 38 years: 16 of those years were at FMTC, 2 at Lehigh Sr.



MIKE REMY

High, and 20 years at Adult and Career Education (ACE). While working for ACE, Mona played a very important role reporting enrollment, completion, and other statistics to the state which ensured that FMTC, CCTC, and SWFPSA received funding that are crucial to keeping the schools operational.

Mike and Mona are planning a trip to Ohio this summer to visit family and then look forward to relaxing and enjoying retirement, and the grandchildren.