

Today's Quotes: *"The price of success is hard work, dedication to the job at hand, and the determination that whether we win or lose, we have applied the best of ourselves to the task at hand."*

Vince Lombardi 1913 - 1970, Legendary American Football Coach – Green Bay Packers, Champion - Super Bowls I & II

"Never drive faster than your guardian angel can fly." Anonymous

Lifetime of Service - Thank you Peggy Dervitz

Twenty years of service is truly commendable; and thirty years in a particular field is outstanding! Yet, when one talks about close to four decades of dedicated service to supporting vulnerable individuals, you are speaking of service in enormous proportions. Exemplifying this point, Peggy Dervitz is now retiring after 39 years of dedicated state service, including 33 years as the Supervisor of the Northern Regional Office (NRO) of the Bureau of Guardianship Services (BGS).

Ms. Dervitz began her career as a social worker for the Division of Mental Retardation's (DMR) Field Services NRO, covering Bergen County. At that time, Dr. Kott was the DMR Division Director, Watergate was just a hotel without political scandal and an entire *tank* of gas was less than \$5.00 (cost of regular gas was only \$0.35).

As DMR began preparing residential options in the community, 'guardianship' became a full-time position, needing leadership for the exciting beginnings of community-based programs. Ms. Dervitz was in fact the first Northern District Office (NDO) supervisor. For the very first time, enlarging the 'guardianship role' (from institutional guardianship provider to include community settings) required hiring full-time guardianship staff, along with establishing a separate office from field related services.

The selection and training of the new staff was Ms. Dervitz's first challenge. Over the years, the size of full-time staff has doubled, moving three times, and the provision of DMR services shifted from mostly institutional to mostly

community-based. Ms. Dervitz has been steady at the helm through this transition and all the changes.

Ms. Dervitz was the pioneer of the less restrictive concept of limited guardianship. Her conceptual framework for decision-making by the individual, as much as he/she is able, became written policy and then official regulation that the courts could invoke when designing a guardianship specific to the individual's needs. This design leaves as much decision-making authority with the individual as can be safely managed. Where support is needed, such needs are specifically outlined in the court judgment.

Ms. Dervitz conceptual grasp of the problems encountered over a broad spectrum, as witnessed by her staff, enabled her to strongly influence policy issues that affected guardianship. Her well-known writing skills would quietly resolve complicated issues into an understandable framework that could be useful for policy choices.

She will continue to dedicate herself to the development of the Guardianship Association of New Jersey, Inc. (GANJI), which is an organization that sets policy on guardianship in New Jersey and is a member agency of the National Guardianship Association. For those of us who have known her for many years, Ms. Dervitz will be fondly remembered for her home baked breads at office meetings, her love of her dogs, her native Montclair, her writing lessons and her relaxed manner towards one and all.

We wish Ms. Dervitz the best in all future endeavors. Thank you for a lifetime of service to the Division, Department of Human Services and the people we serve.

The New Jersey Council on Developmental Disabilities (NJCDD) <http://www.njcdd.org/>

NJCDD has funding available to help five (5) New Jersey self advocates attend the upcoming national conference of SABE (Self Advocates Becoming Empowered), September 4 – 7, in Indianapolis.

Do not miss out! Due to the number of advocates who may want to apply, the council is selecting by lottery those to receive assistance. The five self advocates will be selected in a random drawing of names from people who are registered!

The deadline to participate in the drawing is Monday June 23. Please contact Norman Reim: norman.reim@njcdd.org or call the council offices: 609.292.3745. The sign-up sheets are also being circulated and posted on the council's web site www.njcdd.org.

DDD Central Office Table of Organization

The Division posted its Central Office Table of Organization on the website, along with a new unit contact list to offer more direct connection to appropriate staff. Please feel free to go to our contact web page, located under the "Call Us" link on the DDD home page, or simply click: <http://www.state.nj.us/humanservices/ddd/help.html>.