

LORNA PASCUAL – December 2016

Moving From Office to Orchids, Lorna Pascual Looks Back on 43 Years of Dedication



Although she has served the Peralta District for more than 43 years, starting at North Peralta Community College on Grove Street, many of her longtime co-workers probably don't know that Lorna Pascual talks to flowers. Not any flowers, but specifically her prized orchids—120 of them—that she nurtures in her backyard. “I talk to them like I'm crazy,” she says. “I'm always asking them, ‘how are my babies doing?’” (Apparently it works because her orchids are stunning, see photo).

She will most likely be having even more conversations with them soon, along with her roses and her fruit trees. She will be retiring on December 31, allowing her to spend more time in her big backyard in El Sobrante. She also will be taking care of her new grandchild when her daughter, Eva, goes back to work.

After more than four decades at Peralta, Lorna will have lots of experiences to look back on.

She moved to California from the Philippines in 1971 and attended what was then called North Peralta Community College where she got an accounting degree, which would end up serving her well throughout her career.

Lorna started working as a typist at North Peralta and when that location closed, she spent a couple of years at Laney College. She then moved to the new Merritt campus and has been ascending ever since. She has been a payroll clerk, a secretary, a financial aid assistant, and the Learning Center Coordinator.

In between she has been called on by the president and the business officer to take over important financial and organizational tasks where her expertise was needed. She has handled the financial budgets of seven grants at once in the Student Services office with Dr. Eric Gravenberg, including the Title III Grant with Dr. Audrey Trotter and the Maximum Achievement Project (MAP) with Carlos McLean. She dedicated several months to working on Merritt's Grant Budgets for the Accreditation Follow-up Report in 2013. And she is currently overseeing the budgets for Student Equity and the Student Success and Support Program.

What has kept her at Peralta for so many years? “At first it was for job security and economic reasons to make sure my two daughters, Loralie and Eva, graduated from college,” she says. “Then I just began feeling comfortable, and it felt like a family to me. But now, I think I've done everything I can do.”

Along with tending to her garden and to her four grandchildren, Lorna has more plans for her free time. “I'm looking forward to going on cruises and vacations around the world with my husband, Dennis, who just retired after 44 years at the post office, and working on other hobbies like sewing. But above all I'm grateful to be in a position where I can make a choice to retire!”



—Susan May

