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## Sheila Rees retires from Levy County after 36 years



Sheila Rees (left) stands with her now former boss Levy County Clerk Danny Shipp. Rees served as a deputy clerk for Shipp, retiring as the chief deputy clerk and finance director. She served all of the Levy County clerks for the 20 years prior to Shipp's taking office 16 years ago.

Story and Photos By Jeff M. Hardison © Oct. 29, 2016 @ 12:07 p.m.

**BRONSON** -- Levy County Chief Deputy Clerk Sheila Rees retired from her job on Friday (Oct. 29), and there was a two-hour party hosted by the Clerk's Office in her honor that afternoon.

Held in a section of the First Baptist Church of Bronson, the retirement party provided an opportunity for scores of people to hug Rees and thank her for her selfless service to the residents and visitors in Levy County for almost four decades.

The cake made by Deputy Clerk Chandra Jordan is seen before being cut and served. Those are 'peanuts' flowing from a basket on top. The cake was a work of edible art.



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**Sheila Rees stands with her colleague and cake-maker Deputy Clerk Chandra Jordan as the first ceremonial slice is about to be made.**

Levy County Clerk Danny Shipp said he has not appointed a person to be the new chief deputy clerk yet. Another title Rees held was as finance director.

Jared Blanton, CPA, is the new finance director and he is the assistant comptroller. As the Levy County Clerk, Shipp is the comptroller for the county.



**Deputy Clerk Ashley Giffen stands behind one of a few tables of food that was enjoyed by partygoers. The Levy County Clerk's Office had many people working together to assure the party was a success. Somehow Shipp finds and retains extremely talented staff members.**

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The loss of Rees was not unexpected and Shipp knows other staff members are bound to retire in the coming years. Through his program of cross-training and having staff members who work with each other to help one another learn what is needed to serve the people, changes like this are manageable.

“We can cross-train people,” Shipp said. “And we can have people work in the finances. The history she’s got in her head, though, we’ll never be able to replace that.”

Shipp said that he has enjoyed having Rees during his first four terms (16 years) in office. In the past 36 years, Shipp said, the county has seen a lot of change.

Rees was excellent at handling changes, Shipp said. Almost four decades ago, the county was so small everyone almost knew everyone else, he said. While it is still rural, Shipp said the county has grown.

“I hate to see her go,” Shipp said. “After 36 years, though, she definitely is entitled to retire. She took care of all kinds of things in the county.

“She didn’t just do finance in the clerk’s office,” Shipp continued. “She was more than a clerk to me and a clerk to the board (of county commissioners). Sheila worked harder than anybody. She would take work home on weekends, for no extra pay as a salaried person. She did whatever it took to get a job done. And she helped a lot of people – not just as a deputy clerk, but in other ways too.”

Beyond the working knowledge and historic perspectives Rees has, her warm-hearted nature and the twinkle in her eyes will be gone from the courthouse – at least as a worker. There is some likelihood that she will return to visit with old friends.

A number of former courthouse staff members came to the party to give Rees a pleasant sendoff. And there were many current workers who dropped by to enjoy the happy moment with the woman who has been a public servant for so long.



**Carol Healy (left), who worked with Sheila Rees 36 years ago when Rees first started, hugs her friend.**

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Carol Healy, who was in the County Clerk's Finance Office when Rees began her career in Levy County government 36 years ago, came to visit. Healy said "Welcome to retirement" as they hugged.



**Patty Galyean of the Levy County Sheriff's Office, retired bailiff Bubba Castell (seated) and School Board Member Chris Cowart are among the people who came to the party to wish Sheila Rees well as Rees enters retirement.**

Former Levy County Sheriff's Office bailiff and former Cedar Key Police Chief Bubba Castell, came to the retirement party. Castell had to spend some time in the VA hospitals in Gainesville and Lake City a while ago, he said, but he is once again a man about town.

Former Levy County Court Judge Joseph Smith, who has since become Eighth Judicial Circuit Court Judge Smith having also "retired," was another Levy County Courthouse friend to help Rees enjoy her party as she transitions into retirement. Joining Senior Judge Smith was his wife Bobbie Smith.

Among the Levy County elected officials other than Shipp who came to give their regards to Rees were Levy County Sheriff Robert "Bobby" McCallum Jr., Levy County Court Judge J.T. "Tim" Browning, Levy County Supervisor of Elections Tammy Jones, Levy County School Board Member Chris Cowart and Levy County Property Appraiser Osborn "Oz" Barker.

Staff members in Shipp's office helped with providing and serving food.

Deputy County Clerk Chandra Jordan made a beautiful cake for everyone to enjoy at the party.

As for Rees, she said she plans to go fishing. She may even find a chance to enjoy some golf games.

When asked if she would help her husband Bill Rees with his farming operations, she said that potential exists as well.

"I will miss everyone," she said, adding that this change in her life evokes many different emotions.