

JOHNSTON, Ruth.

□ PEOPLE

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# Ruth has seen it all...from guns to manual calculation

*CIBC veteran employee ready for her retirement*

By Bill Hunt

*Bel - Bing*

The Intelligencer

When Ruth Johnston started working at the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce, the world of finances was run by men, every bank branch had a gun and interest was calculated manually.

Times have changed.

After working 29 years at the same branch and three years across the street, Johnston, 58, is hanging up her suspenders, so to speak, June 14.

"When I started it was predominantly a man's world," she says of the banking industry. "Women weren't allowed to join the pension plan."

She leaves the field as the account manager for small business. But Johnston admits when she began as an current account teller in January, 1964, "I didn't know a debit from a credit."

The job was offered to her by the branch manager while Johnston was working part-time at Roluf's



Intelligencer photo by Bill Hunt

**Ruth Johnston.**

music department. She also taught music to public school students.

In 1964 every bank accountant had a gun they carried when escorting cash-laden employees to the post office or other banks, says Johnston.

Technology has brought the biggest changes to the industry, she says.

Tellers calculated interest on accounts monthly, using a crank calculator. It could take several days, she recalls. Today it is done automatically.

Tellers were forbidden to use ball point pens because they might smear and the notion of automated banking machines was unheard of.

One constant in the business has been the contact with people.

"You develop a lot of great relationships with a lot of customers," says Johnston. "Some of them become close friends."

She'll likely continue seeing those faces in the community as Johnston is the keyboardist with the Land 'O' Lakes Cruisers which performs three weekends a month. She's also taking golfing lessons and hopes to spend a little more time at her second home in Arizona during the winter.

Customers and friends who would like to wish her all the best, can do so during an informal retirement party at the Ramada Inn June 13 from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m.

After June 14, they'll have to watch for her on the stage or the golf course.