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Dot Smith retires from HRPS

By Scott Kline

A small piece of policing history in Georgetown left 11 Division for the last time earlier this month.

After 23 years, Dot Smith — the longest serving civilian in the Halton Regional Police Service — left the Georgetown detachment for the last time.

"I don't feel like I'm retiring," Smith said. "I'm 60 but I feel like I'm going to start another job."

Throughout her career, Smith has seen many changes in the way police business is conducted in Halton.

In 1974, the Georgetown Police Department — where Smith started her career — was absorbed into the Halton Regional Police Service and Smith moved into the position of secretary to the District Commander.

Performing what she called a "tremendous" job, Smith was a jack-of-all-trades — at times a statistician, accountant, letter writer, mathematician.

"I don't think you realize how much you do until you show someone else what you do," Smith said. "I honestly didn't realize all that I did."

Above all she has found her position "fascinating...I can't imagine doing anything else."

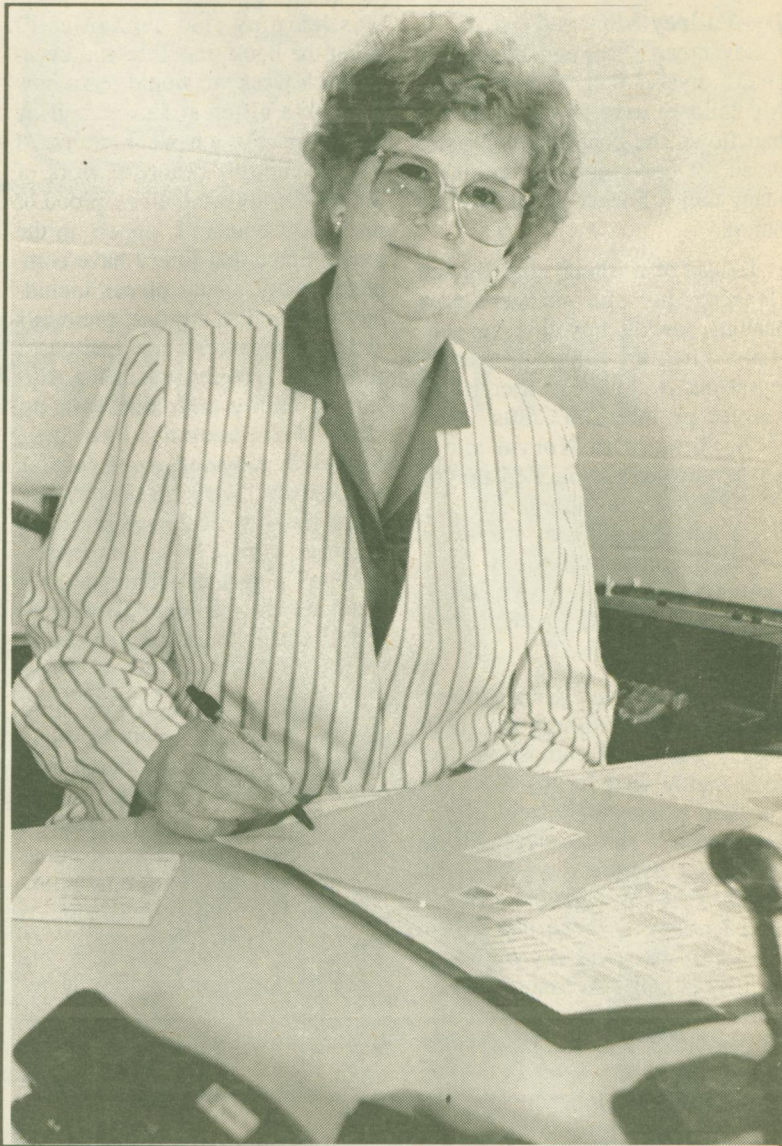
But her duties have not always been easy.

Smith vividly remembers an incident in the early 1970s when police found a 10-year-old boy who had fled a foster home.

"All this little boy wanted to do was find his mother," Smith said. "We knew his mother wanted to have nothing to do with him."

"He had the tired, saddest eyes I've ever seen," she added. "All we could do was give him some soup and then turn him over to the Children's Aid Society."

"My heart really went out to that little boy...I've never forgotten



him." But there has been little time to dwell on the low points in her career.

Halton Regional Police have been on the leading edge of computer use in police work. For the civilian staff computerization has led to constant retraining and upgrading, Smith said.

She said that while the computerization has meant extra work for the staff "it is very, very necessary (and) for the better."

Smith has not thought much about her retirement plans — "I still can't consider the fact that I'm leaving."

"This is a great bunch of people to work with," Smith said. "They can see the funny side of everything."

"I can say without hesitation that these have been the happiest years of my working life...there has always been such a sense of family here...I'm really going to miss them."

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