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Dexter City Collector Crystal Allstun to Retire After 30 Years

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After more than a 30-year career with the city of Dexter and 20 years as city collector, Crystal Allstun has decided to retire. She believes she is the longest serving female at the city collector position in Dexter's history.

"I appreciate the citizens of Dexter for re-electing me all these years and putting their confidence in me and keeping me here. I really do appreciate them," Allstun said. "There are so many good citizens in this town, just good people here. It's a great place to live. A lot of people come back and retire here because it's just a great place to be. I do appreciate the people who have done that for me over the years."

Allstun started her career with the city as a part-time employee with the Dexter Police Department in December 1991.

Allstun first moved to city hall at the request of Mayor Willis Conner. Conner reached out to the Chief of Police Steve Fish, after the city collector at that time, Pearl Swinger, was forced to take a leave of absence due to illness. Conner was seeking someone to help out at city hall on a temporary basis until Swinger's return.

"Steve said I have this college student who is willing to come help," said Allstun. "So I came over to help for a few days because at that time we expected the collector, Swinger, to be able to come back."

Unfortunately he would not be able to return and later passed away.

Gail Simmering was then appointed to the city collector position. This opened up a full-time position at city hall. Allstun, who at this time had graduated from Three Rivers College with a business degree, would continue to serve as assistant collector under Simmering.

“She (Simmering) was huge influence,” said Allstun. “I worked under her for 10 years and I learned a lot. She was a great mentor, she did a very good job, was very thorough, so that is where I learned a lot of skills in what to do and how to handle everything.”

Upon Simmering’s retirement in 2002, Allstun ran for the city collector position for the first time. She emerged victorious over five other candidates seeking the position. Allstun said though Simmering endorsed her, there was no incumbent in the April 2002 election. Simmering retired at the end of her term and Allstun was not yet elected.

“I consider people up here at work family and even extended departments the same way,” said Allstun looking back on her career. “Because you are here eight hours a day with people, so they get to know you on a personal level and you as well. It will be weird not to be around people I have been in contact with day in and day out all these years. They know me, they know my family, they know things about me. So they are kind of like a family and that’s going to be kind of different for me not having that interaction.”

Allstun then spoke of her love of the city.

“There is a lot of good people in the town anyway and you (meet) customers over the years and you get to know them as well,” said Allstun. “I won’t have any of that interaction. So that will be a little different for me. I think on a social level it’s going to be a little different than what I prepared for.”

Allstun has no set plans for her retirement except to enjoy it.

“I really don’t have anything else I’m going to do other than enjoy life,” said Allstun. “I want to be able to spend some time with my mother who is older in age and starting to have some health issues. Just be around family and enjoy time that I have.”

Allstun spoke highly of Kendra Williams, who will take her seat on Aug. 15, 2022.

“She actually was my assistant when she came to work for the city about 17 years ago. The treasurer retired at that time so she moved to the back office and became treasurer, so she started out with me and she is ending with me me,” laughed Allstun. “I am confident

that she will be fine - she and I always worked together very well even in the beginning. Of course everything has changed as far as systems and programs. We are training and I am confident she will be fine.”

“I am thankful, I am just very thankful I can even do this (retire). I am not leaving on any bad terms or anything,” said Allstun. “When I decided I was going to this, I went in to (city administrator) Trevor (Pulley) and told him this has always been my goal. I am not mad or upset with anyone this has just always been my goal and I am able to do it. It’s just something I was able to do so I took the opportunity.”

Looking back on her career Allstun said she has had the opportunity to contribute to several upgrades at city hall.

Allstun said she was influential in going to the electronic meter reading systems now used by the city. She said she also assisted with new programs that allow for more customer options including web payments, draft payment options and tax payment options. Allstun said these systems are now in line with what the county uses. She said it is not all the paper copies like in the past, electronic filing is now an option.

“The biggest thing would probably be the meters. We went to electronic meters in in 2007 with that program,” Allstun said. “I was able to get that passed, I worked on that for quite awhile.”

She also said she wrote some grants under Simmering. These grants allowed renovations to the vault at city hall and a secondary vault to be built.

“As with any job you have your highs and lows but it’s been a good job,” said Allstun. “I have learned a lot over the years and met a lot of people. I’m happy.”

“We want to thank Crystal Allstun for the numerous years she has dedicated to the City of Dexter,” said City Administrator Trevor Pulley.”We would like to wish her well in her retirement.”

Photo and article submitted by Josh Ayers, Editor, Dexter Statesman.

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