

Farewell, Phil!



Phil Sheehan, *center*, endures some light roasting with characteristic aplomb during his retirement party.

Is there anyone at Clark College who can remember the college without Phil Sheehan? Not likely—the Director of Information Technology, who retired on September 26 after 38 years of service, was walking the campus long before he began working here. In fact, he was a regular presence even before he started taking classes here in 1966: His father, Bill Sheehan, taught psychology at Clark for 24 years, and young Phil was a frequent visitor as a child.

One way or another, Clark College has been part of Phil Sheehan's life—and vice versa—almost since he was born. So it's no wonder that PUB 161 was filled with people wishing him a fond farewell during a retirement party held September 24. The crowd included not just current colleagues, but also

former colleagues who had preceded Sheehan into retirement or moved onto other workplaces—a testament to the connections he had forged with so many people at the college over the past four decades.

The speeches began almost immediately, and were long and heartfelt. Clark College President Bob Knight, who often composes “odes” to outgoing employees, recited a truly epic one in honor of Sheehan. “There aren’t too many in Penguin Nation history,” it read in part, “who have the makings of Phil’s pedigree.”

After graduating with his Associate of Arts degree from Clark in 1968, Sheehan earned his bachelor’s degree in Communications from the University of Washington in 1970, then returned to Clark to earn an Associate of Applied Science. He began teaching Electronics at Clark in 1976; in 1992, he took on the newly created position of Director of Computing Services at the college, which eventually became Information Technology. He earned an M.B.A. from Marylhurst University in 2002. In 2006, he was tapped to serve as Interim Vice President of Administrative Services, a position he held from for more than two years.

“I just can’t think of anyone who has had more of an impact at the college,” said Associate Vice President for Planning & Effectiveness Shanda Diehl before presenting Sheehan with a handmade quilt made of Clark College T-shirts. “In 1992, technology didn’t rule our world. And now it does. I know we all appreciate how meticulous you’ve been.”

“You go into a classroom here and expect the technology to work, and work well,” added Vice President of Instruction Dr. Tim Cook. “And I know that’s in large part because of Phil.”

Sheehan was characteristically soft-spoken and matter-of-fact when taking over the mic. “Clark has been a great place to work,” he said to the room full of well-wishers. “When we

started out, we just were using mainframe computers. Personal computers hadn't even come on the scene. And then we started having networks. So it's been a real roller coaster. It's been a great job—never a dull moment.”

Photos: Clark College/Jenny Shadley