

ALWAYS SOME



MAKING REPAIRS AND ADDING COLOR

JOSE COVARRUBIAS: General Maintenance

LENGTH OF BRADLEY EMPLOYMENT: 36 years

There's no such thing as downtime when you work in maintenance, according to Covarrubias. During the school year, he spends much of his time repairing things. In the summer, when students are gone, he paints. His newest challenge? Finding the best way to install plexiglass, now a common task because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Through it all, Covarrubias' focus is on customer service.

EVERY DAY, IT'S AN ADVENTURE," HE SAID. "BECAUSE YOU HAVE TO BE READY FOR WHATEVER COMES ... LIKE, THE OTHER DAY, SOMEONE CALLED ME ABOUT AN AIR CONDITIONER LEAKING WATER. I HAD TO COME UP WITH THE BEST SOLUTION THAT WOULDN'T (DAMAGE) ANYTHING ... IT'S ALWAYS SOME KIND OF CHALLENGE."

They're the unsung heroes who work hard while many of us are still asleep in our beds. They take the graveyard shift or work weekends. They clean up the detritus of our days. And when an emergency strikes, they're often the first to get the call. Bradley magazine spoke with four employees who help keep the university humming along.

THINK DIFFERENT:

HOW BRADLEY'S ESSENTIAL WORKFORCE KEEPS THINGS RUNNING

INDISPENSABLE

BY S.L. GUTHRIE M.A. '20

PHOTOGRAPHY BY EVAN TEMCHIN

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FIRST LINE OF DEFENSE

DEANNA LORENTZ: Central Communications Operator

LENGTH OF BRADLEY EMPLOYMENT: 8 years

During her eight-hour shift, Lorentz will take calls from anywhere on or off campus. A prospective student wants information, while a current student is having trouble signing up for classes. A professor needs help with a computer issue. While she's handling any number of calls, a fire alarm might sound or a police emergency happens.

The days alternate between quiet and frenetic.

"A lot of times I'm here until 3:30 in the morning," said Lorentz, noting her biggest challenge is when everything happens at once. "You learn to adjust."

Lorentz spent 20 years caring for infants and toddlers in several area daycare facilities before coming to Bradley. She said those years were great training for her current role.

"I say I still take care of everybody; they're just bigger now."

REMOVING DIRT AND GERMS

TINA MAHER: Custodian

LENGTH OF BRADLEY EMPLOYMENT: 23 years

Perhaps the most essential staff during a pandemic are the custodial workers who keep Bradley's campus clean and disinfected. With fewer people on campus, they've been able to clean at a deeper level. Maher said people shouldn't confuse her work with what they do in their own homes.

"(There's) the disinfecting of so many areas: bathrooms, top to bottom; showers, telephones, computer screens, door handles, glass," she said.

While cleaning may be a drudge to some, Maher is happy in her role.

"Well, I love to clean, and that's pretty much been my job title (nearly) ever since I've been in the workforce. And Bradley's a good place to work. I made my career here. I hope to retire from here."



(PEOPLE) DON'T REALIZE THERE IS ALWAYS SOMEBODY HERE THEY CAN TALK TO. AND IF WE CAN'T FIGURE OUT WHO'S SUPPOSED TO HELP THEM IMMEDIATELY, WE'LL FIND ANOTHER WAY TO GET (THE ISSUE) TAKEN CARE OF."

— DEANNA LORENTZ



“PEOPLE CAN CUT CORNERS WITH (CLEANING) AT HOME ON THEIR OWN. BUT AT BRADLEY, THE WAY WE SERVICE WITH SO MANY PEOPLE FROM ALL AROUND, YOU’VE GOT TO BE MORE SPECIFIC AND MORE DETAILED ON HOW YOU TAKE CARE OF THINGS.”

— TINA MAHER

LYNN SMITH: Lead Custodian

LENGTH OF BRADLEY EMPLOYMENT: 17 years

For Smith, tasks such as extracting carpets (a commercial-grade cleaning) can mean moving heavy furniture. At other times, she has to climb on bunk beds to clean the walls in a residence hall. The work adds up to plenty of sore muscles and Smith often starts her day with a couple of aspirin.

Despite the toll the job can take on her body, Smith said there are definite rewards to her work. **B**

“YOU DO HAVE STUDENTS THAT COME UP TO YOU AND SHOW THEIR APPRECIATION AND SAY THANK YOU FOR CLEANING. A LOT OF THEM DON’T, BUT WHEN ONE DOES, IT MAKES YOU FEEL A LITTLE PRIDE IN WHAT YOU DO.”

— LYNN SMITH

