

## DEOMI's Ms. Morrison Retires with Nearly 52 Years of Federal Service

**PATRICK SPACE FORCE BASE, Fla.** – A retirement ceremony was held for Constance “Connie” Morrison, a library technician with the Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute (DEOMI), in recognition of nearly 52 years of federal service, Apr. 26.



More than 42 of those years was with DEOMI, making her one of the longest serving employees in DEOMI's history.

“What an amazing and very significant milestone,” said DEOMI's Commandant, U.S. Navy Capt. Delmy Robinson, during the ceremony. “[Morrison] has been a shining light and the critical factor in the evolutionary process that has made [DEOMI] the premiere institute it is today.”

Prior to Morrison's official retirement, Dec 31, 2021, she was often consulted because of her personal experience in DEOMI's decades-long evolutionary process. Coincidentally, Morrison attributes her own personal evolution to her time and experiences at DEOMI.

Morrison, a native of Orlando, joined the DEOMI family in September 1980 as a library technician, a position she almost passed up because she felt it was not the right path for her.

“During the interview, I remember thinking I didn't want this job,” Morrison said. “I didn't think it would be a good fit for me because it was unlike anything I had done before,” she added.

Morrison explained that prior to coming to DEOMI, she considered herself as an introvert and struggled to find a career path that felt right. She studied to be a school teacher at Illinois State University for a year before her introverted nature led her to believe she was meant for something else. Not long after having left the university, she thought she would give civil service a try.

In February 1970, she applied for a civil service position as a hospital library technician at Chanute Air Force Base in Illinois, which, began as an air field to train World War I pilots in 1917 and went through many transitions until it was closed in 1988. Morrison worked at the hospital library for 10 years before she decided to move to be closer to her family in Orlando.

“While I didn't grow up [in Orlando], it's where my father retired [from the Air Force] and where most of my family lived,” said Morrison, who added, “its home for me.”

Now in Florida and sitting in an interview for a position as a DEOMI library technician, the position she didn't think would be a good fit for her, Morrison said something unexpected happened.

“Surprisingly, when offered the position, yes came out of my mouth,” she said.

As a library technician, she was responsible for cataloging books and other materials, administering the interlibrary loan program, performing literature searches using several educational databases, and



retrieving reference information for DEOMI instructor/trainers, staff, and students. She managed the library budget, ensuring the institute has a wide variety of books, DVDs, and other educational materials and manages the budget for the library. She also briefed incoming students and staff on library operations, procedures, and resources.

Morrison said her position has been both interesting and challenging. Interesting because she's met thousands of military and civilian personnel throughout her tenure. Challenging because she was often in high demand.

"I enjoy working with the students on their writing/briefing assignments, as well as the summer researchers. Helping students find what they are looking for, or didn't know what they were looking for," said Morrison.

"I always felt needed. Students would trail behind me in a line, waiting their turn to be helped," she said with a joyous smile while reminiscing on fond memories. "Some students would tap on my shoulder or tug at my shirt just to remind me that they wanted my help. It was very satisfying to be wanted/needed. To this day, I still keep in touch with some of the students who came through here," she added.

Morrison's kind-hearted nature and willingness to lend an ear is not limited to DEOMI students. Most of DEOMI's current and former staff members have nothing but the utmost admiration for her.

"She is such an icon, and it's hard to capture all she has meant to this place. Commandants, staff, students...they all have come and gone, but [Morrison] has lived up to her name," said fellow DEOMI Library Technician, Dawna René Stevens.

Stevens, who has been with DEOMI for six-and-a-half-years, said Morrison has been more than a co-worker—she's been a mentor and friend. Stevens also said that the thing she will miss most when Morrison retires is her warm friendly attitude and constant presence.



"There will never be another 'Ms. Connie,'" said Stevens. "The day she leaves, DEOMI will lose its unofficial historian. Her vast knowledge of DEOMI is irreplaceable," she added.

“Connie is a person of unparalleled integrity and dignity,” said Andrew Adaryukov, who served as DEOMI’s librarian from 2011-2021. “In my eyes, she went from being a valuable and reliable team member, to a trusted colleague and collaborator, whose opinion, advice, and insight I sought on all important library-related matters, to a close friend and confidante,” Adaryukov added.

Morrison received numerous civilian of the quarter, civilian of the year, and notable achievement awards throughout her career. These accolades exemplify her caliber as a dedicated and hard-working individual. What these accolades do not show is Morrison’s strong devotion to volunteering.

Morrison has been a long-standing member of the DEOMI Booster Club, a non-profit organization. In addition to being a participating member, she also served as the club’s president, vice president, recorder, and treasurer.

“It has been fun organizing and participating in numerous [club] events,” said Morrison.



In the past, Morrison said the club hosted numerous holiday parties, picnics for students and staff to celebrate the end of a course, and fund raising events. She has also been involved with the selection, purchasing, and sales of the DEOMI memorabilia, such as shirts, hats, and coffee mugs.

“The Booster Club really helped bring out the extrovert in me,” she said.

After more than 41 years with DEOMI, Morrison witnessed the institute’s evolutionary process, served as a leading expert and unofficial historian, and volunteered countless hours in support of a booster club; but most of all, she helped to educate, inspire, and cultivate generations of equal opportunity professionals.

“I really enjoyed helping people,” she said. “I don’t remember exactly when, but I quickly realized that I am where I am truly meant to be,” said Morrison.

With a tear in her eye, Morrison expressed her gratitude and thanks as she addressed her family, friends, and fellow colleagues in the audience.

“It has been a journey and my heart is truly in this place,” said Morrison.