

Kimi Harris: OREMC Herstory

It all started with a mail cart. But 30 years later her signature laugh still reverberates through the halls of OREMC's Nahunta office, letting you know Executive Secretary Kimi Harris is in the house!

Kimi began working at OREMC in 1987 as a VOT student—or Vocational Office Training. A fresh-faced and friendly 11th grader from Brantley County High School, she was the “gopher” for then Executive Secretary Dorothy Justice. “I had a little cart and delivered and picked up interoffice mail every afternoon,” Kimi recalls. “It was fun. I used to talk to people and get to know them.”

She and two other girls also did filing, ran to the post office, prepared bank deposits, typed up work order numbers for Engineering and covered the switchboard. “Back then we had to manually connect calls when they came in on the main line. There was a magnetic board with all the managers and supervisor names on it, and if they were out, they would slide a little dot over indicating when they would be back in. So, we had to take messages and leave them in a carousel on the desk for them to collect when they returned to the office.”

After graduation in 1989 Kimi continued to work part-time. One day the General Manager Emory Middleton stopped her in the hallway and asked if she wanted full-time work. The rest, as the saying goes, is history.

Once full-time she was a cashier working the drive-up window taking and posting payments from the cash box. After Robert Page became the general manager, Kimi began working more directly with Dorothy and doing general secretarial work for other managers as needed. She shared an office with Pam Curtis.

“I didn’t know Kimi very well before we began sharing an office,” notes Pam. “but I knew she was friendly and liked to make sure everyone felt at ease. She was very young but committed, just as she is today, to professionalism, doing a good job and detailed-oriented. I watched her develop professionally and got to know her personally over the years. As OREMC has grown and evolved, so too has Kimi, making her a central figure here at the co-op.”

Don Holland became the general manager in 1993 and Kimi moved into the executive secretary position in 1995 after Dorothy retired. As times and technology changed, so too has Kimi’s work. She notes, “OREMC has always been family oriented. I think it is because work was so social, there were so many people and processes involved. The office used to buzz with activity. Automation and email changed work a lot, including my own which is now much more centered on the Board Directors, helping plan events and office gatherings . . . we like to eat!”

Family first is still the foundation of OREMC under John Middleton’s leadership, says Kimi. She has raised both of her kids—Rhett who works for Pike, and Emilee who just graduated from high school—while working here and has a lot of good memories of employee appreciation events and Christmas parades. It has been a good place to work and she is grateful for all the opportunities, but says, “I’m thankful for that mail cart that connected me way back when.” She is a tie that binds.

