

HALLOFFAME

A long-time farmer, public school teacher, township secretary, and supervisor, **Craig Long** is used to juggling a variety of responsibilities. Never one to shy away from hard work, he stays busy with farming and township duties since retiring from teaching a dozen years ago.

A Farmer's Work Ethic

Craig Long

Windsor Township, Berks County

33 years of service

BY AMY BOBB / CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Days start early for Craig Long, secretary-treasurer of Windsor Township, Berks County.

Every morning, he is up by 5:30 to milk the dairy cows and feed the 40 animals on the small farm where he lives. Then it's time to tend to his part-time duties for the township before he returns to the barn again in the late afternoon to prepare for the evening milking and feeding.

In warmer weather, he will likely spend part of the day in the fields helping with the hay crop. Evenings may be occupied by meetings at the township, where he has also served as a supervisor since 2001.

"It's busy," Long acknowledges.

But it's a busy life he is accustomed to ever since he and his wife bought their 64-acre farm in 1973 and he became Windsor Township's secretary 11 years later.

"When the previous secretary-treasurer retired, the supervisors asked if I wanted to take the part-time post," he recalls. "They knew I had expertise working with books and paperwork



Craig Long, Windsor Township's secretary-treasurer since 1984, has always had a good relationship with the supervisors he works alongside. He recalls township meetings in the early years when he and the supervisors would speak Pennsylvania Dutch if no one from the public was there. He continues to use the dialect around the house to talk to his wife and attempt to teach his two grandchildren.

as a school teacher and as chair of the school's science department."

He taught biology at the secondary level for 36 years until he retired in 2005. Juggling many jobs and responsibilities is what Long does best. In fact, you might say he brings a farmer's work ethic to any job he undertakes.

"Craig is a husband, a father, a

farmer, a former school teacher, and a dedicated township supervisor," says his fellow supervisor David Mazaika. "With all of these titles, he keeps himself very busy."

Technology marches on

Since stepping into the part-time job of township secretary-treasurer in 1984, Long has kept up with the record keeping as it evolved from pen and paper to computer and the internet.

"From the mid-'80s to now, the biggest change would have to be the use of electronics to get work done," he says. "It has helped considerably in speeding up communication and making things more efficient."

All the same, he says, any time freed up by these technological advances was quickly consumed by the increasing demands placed on townships over the years. "The pile only gets higher as more regulations come through," he says.

He is proud of the efficient record-keeping and accounting systems he has developed for the township over the decades. For many reasons, Mazaika says, the township has come to rely on Long as a highly competent secretary and treasurer.

"He is very thorough and precise with his secretarial duties, and he has a full understanding of the large amount of paperwork that comes along with

that position,” he says. “As treasurer, he has the numbers right. Everything is laid out so it is easy for the board, as well as the public, to understand as they view the minutes and budget numbers at each meeting.”

While his job may have evolved with technology, the community of approximately 2,000 where he lives and works has remained relatively unchanged over his three decades of service. “Windsor Township has been and remains a rural, predominantly farming community,” Long says.

Although there are a few small subdivisions and some industrial zoning, the township is comprised mostly of mountain land — the Appalachian Trail runs through it — and farmland, with much of it zoned agricultural preservation and protected through the state’s Clean and Green Program.

“We are primarily an agricultural township, and Craig understands the needs and struggles of today’s farming families,” Mazaika says.

Free of controversy

With more animals than people in the township, Long says life in Windsor Township has always been relatively peaceful with few major controversies or issues. He recalls dealing with litigation to close down a private landfill when he first started in the ’80s and occasionally experiencing conflict when zoning amendments, such as a recent plan to allow warehousing, occur. For the most part, however, the meetings of the board of supervisors are calm and routine.

“We have it relatively easy here,” Mazaika agrees. “The cows don’t give us too much trouble.”

Perhaps that’s why Long has remained as long as he has.

“I feel fortunate that in all the years I’ve been involved in the township, there hasn’t been much consternation,” he says. “You hear about townships where board members don’t get along, but that’s not the case in Windsor Township.”

He credits his years of being a school teacher and working with teenagers in helping him keep his cool and learn to listen first. “I’m not one to speak off the cuff and be spontaneous,” he says, add-

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ing that he prefers to respond only after thoughtful reflection.

Paul Reidenhour, who has served as a supervisor and roadmaster for the past 12 years, has come to appreciate his easy-going yet knowledgeable colleague.

“He’s been there so long, he knows everything that has happened in the township,” says Reidenhour, who is also a farmer. “It’s nice to have someone like him that we can rely on.”

Mazaika, chair of the board, concurs. “Craig is a major asset and fits in very well with the topography of our township,” he says. “He plays his part in maintaining our township as an agricultural community, yet he is not opposed to growth in moderation.”

Looking to the future

Long has five years remaining on his current term as supervisor, and he says it’s too early to know what the future holds after that. Yet, at 70 years old, this busy farmer recognizes he has to start planning for the next generation.

He and his wife have begun to discuss how to keep the farm in the family. His older daughter and one of his sons-in-law help on the dairy farm now, and his wife and brother-in-law are partners in an excavation and farming operation that includes the main 300-acre family farm where they grew up.

“We are hoping to have it all incorporated and keep it going,” he says.

Likewise, Long is also thinking about the township’s future. Windsor doesn’t have any full-time employees, and he admits it’s sometimes difficult to find people to serve in a part-time post, whether it’s as a committee member, a road laborer, or a township supervisor. “It is a dilemma at times to find qualified, dependable people,” he says. “If it’s snowing at midnight, we need to have someone we can rely on to show up to plow.”

One thing he hopes to see before leaving office is the construction of a new township building with offices for the secretary, tax collector, and zoning officer. Because the current town-

ship space is relatively tight (*with only a meeting room, garage, and salt shed*), Long conducts his secretarial duties from an office in his home.

“The engineer is starting to do work on a new building now although there are no definite plans in place yet,” he says.

In the meantime, Long will rely on his farmer work ethic to continue what he has done for the last 33 years — putting his nose to the grindstone and working hard on behalf of the township.

“Craig is an all-around great guy to work with,” Mazaika says. “I would like to say thank you, thank you, Craig, for your 33 years of service, and thank you from the citizens of Windsor Township whom you have represented and helped over the past many years.” ♦

How PSATS has helped this Hall of Famer

During his 33 years as secretary-treasurer at Windsor Township, Craig Long says PSATS has helped him in many ways. “I always find the staff to be very helpful and courteous anytime I call to get information,” he says.

A delegate at the annual conference since the early ’90s, he says he can count on picking up a lot of good information during his time spent in Hershey. In addition to the sessions, he says, “I’ve learned just as much, if not more, by talking to other people there.”