

## In The Spotlight with Debra Kaufman Wadsworth Clerk of Court

By Kate Feeks

Debra Kaufman, Clerk of the Wadsworth Municipal Court, grew up in Oberlin, Ohio where she graduated from Oberlin High School in 1972. She moved to Wadsworth a few years later, and it has been her home ever since. As a new resident of Wadsworth, Kaufman worked as a legal secretary for Attorney David Hensel, and the law firm Hensel and Guldin.

In January of 1977, the Wadsworth Municipal Court was established and Attorney Hensel was appointed as the first judge. It was then that Kaufman was invited by Judge Hensel to work in the civil small claims division where she stayed for 33 years.

In January 2010, Kaufman was offered the opportunity to fill the position of Wadsworth Municipal Clerk of Court, after the retirement of Marge Laterza in December 2009. "It was a tough decision for me to make because I was so comfortable in what I was doing for so many years. I loved the civil small claims department, but I thought it would be a great opportunity to become the Clerk and be able to finish my career doing something a little bit different." said Kaufman.

A primary responsibility of the Clerk is to file and maintain records. She also collects fines and fees to wit she distributes or expends to various agencies. The Clerk also issues warrants and court orders.

Since she began as Clerk, Kaufman has implemented a few changes. The most significant change for this office has been the ability to do document scanning. "That was one thing that I really pushed for because we don't have room to store all the cases, wave-able tickets and other important paperwork that we have. We started the scanning and now we are comfortable knowing we have the information safe, but out of the way." explained Kaufman.

Years ago her office went from carrying their case paperwork in boxes across the street in order to make room to hiring a storage company. The document scanning has been a success. "Right now we are also working on online payments, so we are hoping this will free up telephone time and allow us to have more time to assist those in the office" Kaufman said.

After so many dedicated years of working at the Court, Kaufman attributes longevity to what best prepared her for her position today. "Court positions are not like normal secretary positions. It really takes several years for people to get really comfortable with what they are doing because of the different set of variables they deal with. After so many years, there are so many things you just know, so I would say longevity has best prepared me for this position" Kaufman said.