

Mary Jo Kopecky



Mary Jo retired in September, 2005, from the Air & Waste Division after 35 years of employment.

She graduated from St. John's University (N.Y.) in Chemistry in 1967 and received a M.S. in Analytical Chemistry from U.W. Madison in 1970. Mary Jo worked as a Research Assistant at the UW Department of Nutritional Sciences for three years doing research on the effects on Selenium in detoxifying Mercury in Japanese Quail. She then joined DNR's Bureau of Air Management as a

chemist assigned to the State Laboratory of Hygiene.

Throughout her career, Mary Jo served as a Section Chief in the Bureau of Water Grants, as Air Planning Section Chief in the Bureau of Air Management, the Director of the Bureau of Wastewater Management and Deputy Administrator in the Air & Waste Division. She also served as the Secretary's representative on the Board of Directors of the State Laboratory of Hygiene, and Chair of the Energy Efficiency Committee of the Environmental Commission of the States.

While working, Mary Jo was elected, in national member votes, to serve six years on the National Governing Board of Common Cause - a non-profit, good government group. While still a member, she is no longer actively involved with the organization - the activities became too much like her work at DNR.

Since retirement, Mary Jo has spent more time with her favorite hobby - embroidery. She is a member of the Embroiderer's Guild of America and has had a showing of her work at Capitol Lakes Retirement Center as well as at the annual Embroiderer's Guild Needlework Shows in Madison.



A gift made by MaryJo for Ron Laessig, named "Winter Dreams"

Her work includes Hardanger embroidery, pulled thread/drawn thread and counted canvas work. Although not a designer, she does make some changes to the color or placement of designs.



Unicorn piece - stitched by MaryJo

Mary Jo did a lot of travelling while at DNR, and so far, is enjoying spending more time at home with her pets. She's supervised some remodeling projects at her home, as well as spending more time keeping her flower gardens in good shape. Mary Jo's favorite retirement activity is to spend a hot summer day with a good book out on her deck with a chocolate malt to sustain her - something she didn't get to do much of while working.



In 2008, Mary Jo took her sister on a tour of Northern Wisconsin to show her all the great places she'd visited while working for the Department. While driving on the county road to Boulder Junction, they saw a wolf come out of the woods and were glad the bike trail they were planning to ride was on the other side of the road!



MaryJo celebrating her sister's birthday at the Rittenhouse Inn

Mary Jo is looking forward to working on more embroidery projects, future auditing of some classes at the UW, and doing a bit more travelling over the next few years.