

Radiator Specialty Honors Mrs. Helen Shipman

By Lori Grier
Post Staff Writer

How long have you been employed at your present job? How old were you when you first became employed there? Have you ever thought about making a 40-year career out of your job?

Mrs. Helen Shipman, 64 year-old clerk in the Advertising Department at Radiator Specialty, 1400 West Independence Boulevard, became an employee at the company when she was 24 years old and has been there for 40 years. She and J.J. Duckworth, who works in the Accounting Department, are the only two employees who have been at Radiator Specialty for 40 years or more. On January 24 Herman Blumenthal, brother of the late I.D. Blumenthal who founded the company, honored Shipman because of her 40 years of untiring service, and she was surprised with a beautiful punch bowl set.

There have been three generations of her family at Radiator Specialty, and at one time all of them were employed together. Spencer Shipman, her late father-in-law, started with the company in 1924 as a batch maker. There were only three employees in the entire company then when it was on Graham Street. George Shipman, her late husband, was with the company for 33 years as a foreman when it was relocated to West Independence Boulevard. Then, Don Hendricks, her nephew, was employed as a batch maker for a couple of years.



Mrs. Helen Shipman in a 1970 pose with her nephew, Don Hendricks. She is the third of three generations of Shipmans who have been employed at Radiator Specialty. Her husband, George Shipman, and her father-in-law, Spencer Shipman, are deceased.

What has kept the mother of two—Kelvin Ervin, 46, and Rhonda Shipman, 13—at a 60 year-old company known for its automotive products, garden supplies, safety cones and rubber for 40 years? "It doesn't seem like 40 years, because I enjoy working there and love the people. We're like a family, and there's a good working relationship with the employees," began Shipman.

She planned to be with Radiator Specialty for a couple of years, but something convinced her otherwise. "After I was transferred (three months after she first began) from the

Chemical Department to the Advertising Department, I knew I would learn so much more like setting type for price lists, making labels for products and using the mimeograph and multigraph machines. I also knew that the machines would help me do the work instead of just using my hands. I learned how to do things the hard way, which is sometimes the better way," she added.

During her career there she has never considered going anywhere else, but she has always wanted to learn how to operate the printing press. Maybe she'll achieve that goal before retiring next year. One of the rewards she treasures is the gold-en-

graved locket for her service presented by the late I.D. Blumenthal.

After touring the company on Independence (there's also one located in Indian Trail), the atmosphere Shipman described as a "place you'd like to be for a career," was omnipresent. There are approximately 500 employees (40 percent black) at the Independence location and approximately 300 employees (10-12 percent black) at the Indian Trail location. As you enter the front door, you are greeted by a display of the more than 3,000 products and pictures of the late I.D. Blumenthal and the company. The conference room, surrounded with products, contains

that magical formula (Radiator Repair) used to seal leaks in the radiator which made millions for Blumenthal. The company is also comprised of six workers in the Receiving Department, eight sales correspondents, 15 people in the Printing Department which publishes the Jewish Times Monthly Magazine, 45 in the Plumbing Department, 50 in the Chemical Plant and 250 in the Rubber Division. There is an inside cafeteria for the employees.

According to the 40-year employee, there are more women (65 percent) than men (35 percent) at the company. These women, majority 40 and over, operate the heavy presses, are supervisors and perform clerical duties.

The lady whose philosophy of life is "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you," enjoys sewing, cooking in general with a specialty in cakes and salads. In the future, she would like to study tailoring. She is a member of Greater Bethel AME Church where Rev. Levi Brown, Jr. is pastor. Shipman is a member of the Senior Choir, Steward Board, Senior Missionary, Budget and Finance Committee, Youth Division Missionary, Girl Scouts, Concert Choir and is secretary of the Williams Memorial Club and Official Board.

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