

# Eileen Rohrer ending 32-year career at the H-F racquet club

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Eileen Rohrer was a stay-at-home mom who answered a classified ad in 1990. It got her a part-time job as a data entry clerk at the Homewood-Flossmoor Park District's Racquet & Fitness Center. Now, 32 years later, Rohrer, the club manager, is planning to retire on June 30.

"The park district has been very good to me and my family. I want nothing but success for it for years to come," Rohrer said.

Rohrer moved to the community in 1970 with her family, and she graduated from Homewood-Flossmoor High School in 1976. She and her dad would come to what was then a tennis and racquetball facility to play racquetball.

Rohrer's work history was on "the secretarial route," she says, with various positions in Chicago. She was a secretary to architect Helmut Jahn. She also worked for Hyatt International and was promoted to various positions, including associate director for sales for Hyatt Mexico.

She left her downtown position



Eileen Rohrer

when her son Michael was born, followed several years later by the birth of her second son, Matthew. Rohrer's first job at the park district in 1990 gave her flexible hours so she could be an involved parent with her boys.

Rohrer went from a part-time to full-time position, and seven years later was named office supervisor at the rac-

quet club. Five years ago, she accepted the club's manager position.

"How fortunate am I to work for a company that allows for growth from within," she said.

"I've been around and seen a lot," she said. "Probably one of the strengths I had at the time (of my appointment) was we went through a series of managers in a short number of years," and there needed to be stability at the club. "I think I was able to give that to the members and the park district itself."

Competing with boutique facilities "was the big marketing challenge. We brought in great talent," she said, developing branding for the club and a new, fresh look.

"We were on a roll and then COVID. I remember shutting the doors in March (2020). I was here every day, just me and the maintenance supervisor. I had to spend a lot of time crediting people, refunding and just communicating with staff and reaching out to the members letting them know what was going on here, and still thinking of them and hoping they'll want to come back," she said.

The club reopened following Centers for Disease Control and Preven-

tion guidelines. Rohrer credits her outstanding team who worked to keep everything running smoothly – from the regular staff to the personal trainers, fitness staff, tennis coaches and a host of behind-the-scenes people.

Changes brought about because of COVID-19 have been difficult, especially for seniors. Many of them are regulars whom Rohrer has gotten to know over her 32 years at the club.

"Seniors come here. It's a purpose to get up, come to the club, interact with people," she said, believing they felt welcomed and comfortable coming. "I guess it's that customer service attention." She misses those who altered their routines or decided not to return to the club due to the pandemic.

The park district board also is considering a serious revamp of the racquet club, moving it away from a membership facility to one that will welcome community members for programs and events, in addition to the pool, tennis courts and fitness center uses.

"I think this is really an exciting time," she said. "I think the community is really going to benefit from the changes, and I think it's going to be a wonderful thing for the community."

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