

Teresa Ringwood Hoercher, Class of 1978, holds a Bachelor of Arts from Nazareth College, a Master of Library Science from SUNY Geneseo and a Certification in Developmental Education from *The Kellogg Institute* at Appalachian State University.

Her occupations have included Children's Librarian in Geneva and Henrietta, and the first Director of the Rochester Toy Lending Library - a Junior League of Rochester initiative. But it is the long and happy career at Cayuga Community College that is one of her greatest sources of pride and gratitude.

Teresa and husband Bill returned to Auburn NY in 1991 along with four children where they developed strong roots in the community. While involved in all kinds of activities with her busy children, she was also active at Holy Family Church, a founding member of the "Lunches with Love" committee. She was a board member for the Auburn Education Foundation and volunteer and Honor Society Advisor for St. Joseph School.

Teresa's career as the Tutorial Coordinator at Cayuga Community College began in 1993 and continued until her retirement in 2021. This 28-year career was filled with great opportunities to build a tutorial program that earned the highest levels of certification from the College Reading & Learning Association and also served as a model replicated at other colleges. She was active in committee work and for many years the Co-Advisor for PTK, Phi Theta Kappa, the Honor Society for Community Colleges. She is most proud of the relationships she made with faculty, staff and most importantly the tutors and students. *"It was a privilege to witness their growth, maturity, curiosity and confidence. What a wonderful career; I am filled with great memories. I was honored to work with so many incredible mentors and colleagues!"*

Retirement has provided Teresa with plenty of time to get back into the pool for morning laps, be with her seven grandchildren, read and knit. She served as a contributing writer for the CITIZEN for a year continuing in the shoes of Ormie King celebrating the people of Auburn in the "Legends of Auburn" series. But her passion project (and a source of great fun) has been THE POSTCARD PROJECT. (<https://thepostcardproject.us/>) Teresa established this small business as an LLC in 2021, and proceeds from the postcard sales are donated to the Auburn Education Foundation and The Finger Lakes Land Trust. To date, over \$7000.00 has been donated - that's a lot of postcards! *"I was inspired by a couple of old postcards that I found written by my mother and father before they were married. The handwriting took my breath away. I felt my parents were with me in that moment. It was powerful. My hope is to celebrate the joy in sending and receiving postcards. I call it my joy snack!"*

She started a "Little Free Postcard Mailbox" located at Hoopes Park. Visitors are encouraged to take a free postcard. Another project is underway with two 5<sup>th</sup> grade classrooms engaged in a Pen Pal Project. Students from Herman Avenue Elementary School are exchanging postcards with students at the State Street school in Skaneateles.

THE POSTCARD PROJECT was awarded the prestigious New York State Senate 2024 Empire Award "in recognition of outstanding contributions and dedication to the growth, prosperity and betterment of the community and New York State."

When asked about how Cayuga Community College has impacted her life she stated, *"Cayuga Community College is woven into my heart. I entered and exited Cayuga as a student that sought a vision for my future and to find my voice. It was a happy and important time in my life. What an honor to return to Cayuga and carve out a career where I could give back to students that blessing and power that a solid education brings. Thanks Cayuga - for everything!"*