

Retirement allows this staff member to hit the books

January 29, 2016 2:00 PM Carol J. Schlueter
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After nearly 20 years as an executive secretary on the downtown campus, Alma Williams signed up for the university's Voluntary Separation Program. She plans to head to the classroom and get her degree. (Photo by Paula Burch-Celentano)

Alma Williams is one of the longtime Tulane University employees who are exiting the university payroll to pursue new lives and take on new challenges through a [Voluntary Separation Program](#). Today (Jan. 29) is the final day for some of those employees, like Williams, but all will earn benefits such as Tulane tuition waivers and a financial package.

In one part of a series of articles on these valued employees, Williams looks back on her career and ahead to what's next for her.

Q. What is your current job at Tulane and how long have you worked here?

A. I am an executive secretary for the [Histocompatibility Laboratory](#) — we work with the [transplant program](#). I've worked in this position for 19 1/2 yrs.

Q. What will you miss most about working at Tulane?

A. Most of all, I will miss the relationships I have developed with my co-workers over the years and all the positive things Tulane has done for New Orleans.

Q. What are your favorite memories of your career here?

A. The two most favorite memories of my career here at Tulane are working the graduation ceremonies in the Superdome and working with President Scott Cowen in Houston after Hurricane Katrina — that was an important time in our history, and there is a picture of me in the Tulane University [Renaissance book](#).

Q. After you retire, what are your plans?

A. When I retire I plan to go to school at Tulane and get my degree. It's something I always wanted to do. As a mother I've always put myself last, but it's my time now, and I'm going to go for it!

Q. Is there anything you want to say to your colleagues at Tulane?

A. It's bittersweet, and it's not over yet. I will be around until the Lord is ready for me.

"It's my time now, and I'm going to go for it!"

Alma Williams