

Being involved in student activities made her job a joy

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Mary Orazio says being involved in community service days and volunteering at commencement ceremonies are highlights of her career as a Tulane staff member. “I can’t believe that 20 years have gone by,” she says. (Photo by Paula Burch-Celentano)

The [Reily Student Recreation Center](#) is a hustle-bustle place but working there has been a joy for Mary Orazio. Although she has retired from Tulane University after nearly two decades as a staff member, she will have fond memories of being involved in student activities.

Orazio 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](#). Jan. 29 was the final day for some of those employees, like Orazio, while others will delay their departure over the next 12 months. Program participants will earn benefits such as Tulane tuition waivers and a financial package.

In this article, part of a series on these valued employees, Orazio looks back on her career and what’s ahead.

Q. What was your job at Tulane and how long did you work here?

A. I was the project assistant to the programmers in the Reily Student Recreation Center. I was at Tulane almost 20 years, with 10 years at the Reily Center.

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

A. I will miss my connection to Tulane. I enjoyed working at Tulane and taking advantage of the many opportunities there are to participate in the student experience, like working the commencement ceremony, participating in a service day, or attending a Friday on the Quad.

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

A. My two favorite memories of my career at Tulane are 1) planning and working the Reily Rocks event every fall at the Reily Center [held for incoming students during fall move-in with interactive games, free food, live music, and sports and fitness demos] and 2) singing the "[Who Dat](#)" song in proper English. After the video was posted on YouTube, people recognized me. That was a great feeling. President Cowen wrote in his newsletter, "Who Dat!" Or should I say "Who is that!" I loved it.

Q. Now that you are retired, what are your plans?

A. I plan to take a little time off to relax and travel, then I will decide to find a job or return to school. I had started a degree years ago and never finished, so this would be a good time to complete it.

Q. What will your day look like in your new "retired life"?

A. At first my days will look like Saturday and Sunday until it's time to take the next step.

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

A. Thanks for the memories! I can't believe that 20 years have gone by and when I look back I remember the times I shared with each of you.

"I enjoyed working at Tulane and taking advantage of the many opportunities there are to participate in the student experience."

Mary Orazio