

FIVE QUESTIONS WITH PUEBLO'S LONGEST-TENURED TEAMMATE

GPO Customer Service Assistant Irene Martinez Reminisces on Her 36 Years at the Agency

1 **You're the longest-tenured teammate at the Pueblo Distribution Center. Can you tell us about how you got your start here?** When I was 29, I was a single mom and looking for a job. I happened to be looking in the newspaper one day and was talking to my sister on the phone. I remember telling her I saw an ad for a part-time job in the Government. At that time, we had to take a clerical test to get a Government job. I took the test and got called for an interview. I started in July 1986, and I worked part-time. I worked three years as a WAE, which stands for When Actually Employed. We came to work when the full-time employees took vacations. Three years later, I got hired full-time and I got to be off the same times that my son was off school. I've now worked at GPO under seven presidents. When I started working here, my son was nine years old. I now have three adult grandchildren from that son.

2 **Can you talk about what you do on a day-to-day basis for GPO?** When I'm in the building, I handle logins for our customer websites. We send out 20,000 envelopes per month to our customers. Those envelopes include verification codes for our customers who need to log in to order publications from our websites but may not have cell phones or computers. I download orders for several different agencies. I then import, edit them, and export them to the warehouse. I help maintain the websites for several different agencies as well as a large database of customer information. I enter orders, take phone calls for orders, and handle any customer complaints and inquiries. Several callers still ask for the Consumer Information Catalog and The Consumer Resource Handbook which were discontinued in 2016 and 2017. That catalog and the advertisements for the catalog put Pueblo on the map. People who were traveling would stop by and say, "Is this the place where we get the catalog?"



3 **Can you talk about when First Lady Barbara Bush came to visit the Pueblo Distribution Center in 1991?** When Barbara Bush came, it was very exciting for the Center. It took about a month for us to prepare for her to come. What was really exciting was having all the Secret Service here and watching the way they prepared for her visit. This place was crawling with Secret Service inside and out. It was amazing to see her personal guards and how they protected her. The security dogs were so well-trained. I didn't get to meet with her personally because she was mostly with managers. She wasn't in the building very long. She came in and out in about 20 minutes. At the time she was endorsing the literacy program. We had a series of low-price printed publications. One of the books was about teaching your child to read. She picked the book up and took a copy with her. She waved to us, and she had a big smile on her face. She had on a light blue dress and her signature pearls.

4 **How have you seen GPO change over the years since you've been here?** When I started here, we used to cut labels off the letters that came in and actually glue them individually onto the packages to send out in the mail. There was no automation. We did everything with pencil and paper. Everything was done through manual labor. We had one computer in the building and each section would take turns using the computer for a couple hours a day. Now we have about three or four computers per person.

5 **What do you hope for GPO in the future?** Because I'm native to Pueblo, I hope the Pueblo Distribution Center stays here for future generations and that it continues to automate and thrive. I hope distribution is still done out of Pueblo. I would also love to see school field trips to PDC reinstated. We used to have publications for children to teach children about fires and other topics. The children loved coming in here and seeing how things worked.