

## Peoples Bank & Trust Volunteer of the Quarter Shirley Alequas

As a community bank, Peoples Bank & Trust recognizes the value of volunteerism in our communities. Peoples Bank & Trust has established a program to recognize community volunteers who personally exhibit outstanding volunteerism and promote the improvements of our community.

Shirley Alequas has been chosen as the current Peoples Bank & Trust Volunteer of the Quarter.

Prior to moving back to Waverly, during an almost 20-year absence, Shirley had the opportunity to give back to the community where she was raised and to do something that would assist a Waverly organization. One of her first volunteer projects was helping the Waverly Genealogical Society put out the "History of Waverly 1836 - 1986". Even though she lived in the Chicago area, she was able to complete the arrangement, editing, typing, typesetting, photograph reproduction and layout of the history book. An added bonus is that her brother ultimately printed the book.

Shirley was an active member of the Illinois State Genealogical Society where she served as a board member, secretary and later as treasurer of the society. One of the society's projects was working, in conjunction with the Illinois State Archives, to put marriage and death records into a database, which would ultimately go online and be made accessible for researchers working on their family history. She estimates that it was over 800,000 records. Shirley worked on almost every county's records in the state during the project. It was an interesting and a rewarding project.

After serving in the U.S. Army for three years, Shirley joined American Legion Post 262 in 1984. She had previously been a member of both the Junior American Legion Auxiliary and the American Legion Auxiliary. During her membership in the Legion and especially since returning to live in Waverly, Shirley has tried to help with all of their fund raising activities and spent several years serving as Adjutant for the local post and for the American Legion 20<sup>th</sup> District. One of the projects was to put Veteran flag holders at veteran's graves in East Cemetery, St. Sebastian Cemetery and Rogers Cemetery. Several members of the Legion at that time helped to install the flag holders. After joining the cemetery board, Shirley asked for permission (which was granted) to start a flag project for our cemetery similar to the one at Camp Butler. The response and support of the community was overwhelming. She knows everyone enjoys seeing the flags displayed on Memorial Day, 4<sup>th</sup> of July and Veterans Day when weather permits - because they usually tell her they do. Shirley noted, "Again the community support and help has been wonderful. We always have plenty of help to put up the flags and take them down during the flag holidays." Her only regret is that although her mother bought the first eight flags and poles for the project, she didn't live to see how beautiful the cemetery looks when they are all displayed and flying.

Shirley has always been interested in cemeteries and noted that until recent years there was very little information on the internet to help family researchers. She teamed up with Earl Deatherage and together they transcribed the headstones in nearly all of the Morgan County Cemeteries, many in Macoupin, Greene, Scott, Cass and a few in Sangamon County. Along the way, they began taking photographs of the headstones and all of the transcriptions and photos were put online on a website created by Shirley to make it available. Other information was also added which included biographies from old county history books, plat books, newspaper articles and material gathered and put together by Myra Martin and Florence Hutchison. Both were thrilled that their work was online for researchers

to use. Most of the memorials on “Find a Grave” today was entered from the material Earl, Myra, Florence and Shirley originally put together. The internet has made it significantly easier to research and document family history.

More recently, Shirley served one term as Alderman from Ward 1 and currently is serving as the City Treasurer. She is a board member and treasurer of the Waverly East Cemetery Association, member and treasurer of the Waverly Lions Club, treasurer of the Waverly Genealogical & Historical Society and Building Committee Chairman for the Legion’s new building project. Along with Bud Hermes, they started the Queen of Hearts game in December 2018 as a way to raise additional money to go toward a new building. Shirley stated, “It has been a slow process and we know people would like to see something happening, but we have to have the money to rebuild before we tear down what we have. Everything costs a lot of money today - I think much more than most people realize.”

Shirley says that she hopes she has been of help to the organizations to which she belongs. She has enjoyed the “work” tremendously and it makes her feel like she has made a contribution. Above all, she knows that she had lots of wonderful help with many of the projects and really wants to share the credit. She said, “I certainly couldn’t have accomplished as much without help.”

Peoples Bank & Trust made a \$250 donation to the Waverly American Legion Building Fund on Shirley’s behalf and her name will be placed on a plaque displayed at the Bank.

Peoples Bank & Trust is an independent Community Bank with ten offices located in Pana, Taylorville, Altamont, Charleston, Tower Hill, Springfield, Morrisonville, Palmyra, Waverly and White Hall. Peoples is a full service bank offering outstanding customer service to customers, small businesses, and farmers in Central Illinois. Peoples First Bancshares, Inc. with corporate offices in Pana, Illinois, is the holding company for Peoples Bank & Trust.