

Harvey Monk Retires as Executive, Mentor and Friend

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In a packed conference room filled with everyone from retirees, interns, the director to a Commerce undersecretary, the Census Bureau family said goodbye to one of its longest serving executives, the Associate Director for Economic Programs, Harvey Monk.

"This is one of those bittersweet moments," said Rebecca Blank, the Department of Commerce's undersecretary for economic affairs. "With all of his institutional knowledge, we will be able to replace him, but we will not be able to replicate him."

In 1971, Monk started his career at the National Processing Center in Jeffersonville, Ind. Three years later, he moved to the Federal Center Headquarters in Suitland, Md., where he worked under Census Bureau icons Shirley Kallek, Roger Bugenhagen and later Tom Mesenbourg in the Economic Surveys Division.

"Our careers have intersected in a number of ways over the last 39 years," said Mesenbourg, now the Census Bureau's deputy director. "During the '70s, one of the most important lessons we learned from both Roger and Shirley was — because they were right there with us doing the same kind of work and that sent a very strong signal to both of us — that there's no such thing as an unimportant job in the Census Bureau."

Monk quickly developed a reputation for exemplary performance, moving from chief of the Foreign Trade Division to assistant director and then the associate director for Economic Programs.

"You have played various roles in my career," said Bill Bostic, who is now the acting Associate Director of Economic Programs. "You have been an advocate, a supporter; and for the last five years, you have been a resource."

Bostic — a 34-year employee — has known Monk as his colleague for 32 years and as his manager for five of those years.

"We would like to thank you for your tireless, dedicated leadership and vision," Bostic said. "We want you to know that you can walk away proudly and confidently that you have provided us with a solid foundation and framework to tackle the challenges of tomorrow."

A recipient of numerous awards, including three National Partnerships for Reinventing Government, Vice President Gore's Hammer Award, the Department of Commerce's Gold Medal Award and the Census Bureau's Bronze Medal Award, Monk's greatest accolade will be those whom he left behind.



Nancy Gordon (left) and Kathy Wallman wish Harvey Monk a happy retirement.

"He is devoted to this institution, and he has given me great counsel on the future. I suspect that there are some people in this room that had those same conversations with Harvey and are better for it,"



Hundreds of well-wishers say good-bye to Harvey Monk at Census Bureau headquarters.

Census Bureau Director Bob Groves said. "We need more people like him; so I hope that those who were counseled by Harvey will become counselors for future generations."

Monk officially retired July 31. His life now includes moving to Clayton, N.C., with his wife, Barbara, and playing golf every day.

"I have come full circle, ending up where I started 39 years ago," Monk said to the hundreds of well-wishers. "However, I will be much older, wiser and have many more friends. I have had a number of successes, but I have the greatest pride in the relationships that I have developed and the friends that I have made."



Harvey Monk turns to address executives Nancy Potok, Rebecca Blank, Nancy Gordon, Bob Groves, Kathy Wallman and Howard Hogan during his July 29 retirement speech.



Photos by Lauren Brenner