

50-Year Team Member Celebrates Golden Anniversary with Jackson, Mich. Store

When Phil Davisson started working for Meijer in June 1973, he never imagined that 50 years later, he'd be celebrating his own retirement from the company and his first store's 50th anniversary all in the same month.

Starting out, one of Phil's first roles as a Meijer team member was laying tile in the newly constructed store on Airport Road in Jackson, Mich. The store wasn't open to the public yet, but when it opened two months later, Phil was at the grand opening to celebrate with the store team and leadership in attendance.

At the time, the Airport Road Meijer was unique, as it was our first store designed to include all offerings on one level. This change was made to ensure that customers using wheelchairs, including Fred's mother Gezina, could access the entire store.

Eleven years later, Phil attended the grand opening of the second Meijer Jackson store on East Michigan Avenue. He not only moved permanently to that store, but he also changed departments, going from maintenance to grocery to work as a receiver. He did everything from getting deliveries of bread to rotating stock and anything else that needed to be done "behind the scenes." Most recently, he worked in dairy, receiving deliveries and stocking coolers and other displays.

This summer, Phil celebrated two more milestones. In June, the East Michigan Avenue store team hosted a party for his 50th anniversary as a Meijer team member, and in early August, they celebrated his official retirement from the company after 50 years of service.

Phil's memories of his 50 years at Meijer are varied, but some things that really stick with him are from his early years at the Airport Road store, like stocking the wax-covered boxes of Braumeister Beer. "They were so slippery that they always fell out of our hands, which broke the bottles," he remembered with a laugh.

Phil knows many of the customers in Jackson and says they didn't want him to retire.

"I always came into work with a smile and a goal to help as many customers and team members as I could that day," said Phil. "I tried to bring my best self each day and do my best."

In his retirement, Phil is looking forward to gardening and fixing up his family farm, built in the 1880s. He has a large garden plot where he grows non-GMO corn, among other vegetables. Phil also loves to travel, and has been to England and Africa, as well as many U.S. states.

Phil will attend one last Meijer celebration this month, attending the 50th anniversary celebration at the Airport Road Meijer store that started his career to celebrate with Meijer leadership and relive some memories from the last 50 years.

When asked about the most rewarding part of his 50 years with Meijer, Phil had an easy answer. "The most rewarding thing was the relationship I had with customers," he said. "I treated them like family, and they grew to be my family, like a home away from home."

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