

## Fifty Years: Finding a Career and Falling in Love at Meijer

Jim Hunt was 16 years old when he was hired for his first job at the Meijer store in Okemos, Mich. a half-century ago.

“We had a family farm, and the farm was being sold,” remembers Jim. “My mom said, ‘You’ve got to go to work.’ So, I came to town, and it was a shock talking to people instead of cows.”

When he started at Meijer on Sept. 14, 1972, his first job was pushing carts. But his farm experience made him adaptable, so the Store Director asked him to help with a variety of tasks, from painting to mowing the lawn. Soon, he was working third shift so he could get his tasks done when there was less store traffic.

“I did whatever was needed to keep our stores up and running,” Jim said.

Jim proved himself to be a very valuable member of the team, and he soon developed a reputation for his dedication and adaptability.

When the East Lansing store opened in 1984, he moved over to that location, and that’s where he stayed until retiring in October 2022. His most recent role was unloading fruits and vegetables from trucks on third shift – a job he held for about 20 years.

Among Jim’s special memories from his 50 years is time spent with Fred Meijer.

“We were all standing in the lunch line in the cafeteria on the mezzanine at the Okemos store when Fred came to visit,” he said. “He told the cashier, ‘Don’t let them pay for it. I’m paying for everything.’ We went and sat down. He came along and sat with us.... Fred was a very people-oriented person.”

Meijer didn’t just give Jim a career he cherished. He also met his wife, Joy, at the Okemos store. They just celebrated their 20th wedding anniversary – and 30 years together. He attributes their romance to getting to know each other at work.

“When you are on the third shift, you run into people,” Jim said.

Even though Jim retired, Joy continues to work third shift at the East Lansing store doing overnight stocking of general merchandise. For Jim, he plans to devote more time to volunteering, traveling and relaxing.

He credits his longevity to a work environment where he felt valued and spent time with co-workers, who became close friends over the years.

“I was told when I started, I could either just be there for a little bit or stay there as long as I wanted to,” said Jim. “And I chose to stay.”

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Additional assets available online: [\*\*Photos\*\*](#) <sup>(1)</sup>

<https://meijercommunity.com/Fifty-Years-Finding-a-Career-and-Falling-in-Love-at-Meijer>