



Cornell University
ILR School

ILR Memory Book Series

From time to time, on-line memory books are made available on the web site of Cornell University's ILR School as a way for past students, colleagues, and friends to post their recollections of faculty and distinguished staff members.

This series collects the comments left by visitors to these memory books.

Ginny Freeman

Ginny Freeman, retired long time ILR Registrar, respected colleague, and friend died from a battle with cancer Thursday, October 28th at home in Ithaca. We know that many students, faculty and staff were positively impacted by having worked with Ginny during her 47 years of dedicated service to the ILR School. Ginny provided a wealth of knowledge and advice and support to students, faculty, and colleagues over the years and will be sorely missed.

The following submissions were made by visitors to the memory book from November 19, 2010 to March 3, 2011.

Thanks for getting me on track Ginny!

- trf, Bergenfield, NJ Nov 19 2010

Rest in peace, Ginny. You will be missed by all.

- M.B., Cornell University Nov 19 2010

I was so sorry to hear of Ginny's passing. I met and got to know Ginny through our association with the Cornell Women's Bowling league. Ginny was such a kind, gentle soul and will be greatly missed by all who knew her.

- Carin Rundle, Caroline, NY Nov 19 2010

Ms. Freeman, You were one of the most caring people that I met at Cornell. Thank you so much for all that you have done for us. You will be remembered forever. Love, Mary

- Mary, New Jersey Nov 19 2010

By the time that I came to the ILR School in 1975, Ginny had already been here for over a decade. As I told her when she was contemplating retirement, it was hard for me to think of ILR without her and I continue to feel that way. The numbers of students whose lives she touched was enormous and the help she gave to faculty members, especially me, was invaluable. Going to Cornell basketball games will never be the same without her (and Gus) being there to take tickets. Ron

- Ronald Ehrenberg, Ithaca Nov 19 2010

I did not have the pleasure of working directly with Ginny but always heard kind words from those who did. She was a huge asset to ILR and will be greatly missed by the Cornell community.

- Bonnie Hockenberry, Newfield, NY Nov 19 2010

You will be missed.

- Gleb, Washington, DC Nov 19 2010

As a freshman ILR student, I was nervous about what to expect, and how I was going to handle a large courseload etc. Ginny put me at ease and made my first few days at Cornell incredibly positive.

- OM, Cornell University Nov 19 2010

Once in awhile a person enters your life and lives to show the true meaning of "Friend", "Wonderful Mother", "Would Give You The Shirt Off Her Back", "Would Never Think of Taking Money for Giving You a Ride" and on and on and on! If I could, I would say this directly to my Friend: "Ginny, Ginny, Ginny, am I ever glad that I knew (and loved) you during your short time here on this earth. Because our time together as friends was too short, it only makes those wonderful memories I have of you all the more valuable and precious!!! Knowing you are with the Love of your life (Gus) has made this a little (not completely, though) more bearable. On that unforgettable morning when Cindy Hayes met me in the ILR parking lot and told me that you were gone from us, I said "Something should be named for Ginny because of her powerful influence on so many students and friends." Cindy's response was: "They should rename the School after her!!!" I agreed 100%!! I could see it now: "The Ginny Freeman School of Industrial and Labor Relations!!! A lot of people love you, Lady; Thank You for Touching our lives." Your Dear Friend, Martha Smith, ILR Career Services

- Martha Smith, 101 Juniper Dr/Ithaca, NY Nov 19 2010

Ginny was the most helpful registrar ever. Her enthusiasm really brightened up Ives.

- SK, Ithaca Nov 19 2010

Ginny was one of the first people I met when I started teaching at ILR. She was kind to the “newbie” who didn’t know a thing about things like when pre-enrollment happened and waitlists. She showed me the ropes and every semester we would gripe about “the system” not doing things the way we had set it up. She was always positive and truly cared about the well being of our students. I would often check in with her when I was concerned about a student to gain her insight and advice. She took me in and always helped me out and I will always be grateful.

- Christina Homrighouse, Spencer, NY Nov 20 2010

As information central, Ginny had one of the toughest jobs - if not the absolute toughest job - in the ILR School. And she was unbelievably good at it. Even more remarkably, no matter how dicey things got, she somehow managed to keep her cool while projecting a genuine warmth and gracious spirit toward everyone involved. I always admired that and often wondered how she did it (despite my accusations, she vehemently denied going home and kicking the dog every night). Because Ginny did so much to make so many of our lives easier and better, her retirement was a bittersweet occasion for us all. That she got to enjoy so little time in retirement is just bitter. RIP sweet Ginny. Your friend, Lee

- Lee Dyer, Ithaca Nov 21 2010

When I arrived at ILR in 2002, Ginny was already an institution. She was the person to go to with any questions regarding classes and I always appreciated her willingness to provide assistance when an issue would arise. Although her knowledge as registrar was invaluable, what I will miss most about Ginny is her friendly and down-to-earth nature. We would occasionally run into one another on our walks from ILR to the parking garage and I always enjoyed chatting with her about the topic of the day. She was a good colleague and friend and she will be missed.

- Brad Bell, Ithaca, NY Nov 22 2010

Ginny Freeman - Professional of Excellence; ILR Dedicated; Kind Friend to All! Forever in our hearts.

- Joan Roberts, Candor, NY Nov 23 2010

I am grateful for Ginny as a friend and as Jim’s colleague in the Office of Student Services in ILR. She was always positive, calm and gracious. Jim greatly appreciated her knowledge of the School of Industrial and Labor Relations and especially of the Registrar’s work. He often said he hoped she wouldn’t leave while he was Director because it would be so hard for the office to function without her knowledge and skills. I am thankful for her life, and I will miss her.

- Carolyn McPherson, Ithaca, NY Nov 27 2010

A common refrain in the ILR School was “Ask Ginny.” I don’t know how many times I have said this to a student or to a colleague -- or heard it said by others. Ginny worked in the trenches at a critical juncture in the school, a role sometimes taken for granted and often with an unseen impact. She assisted students with inordinate calm, patience, and understanding, as well as with high levels of professionalism. She also was a “no nonsense” person, a practitioner of what is often called “tough love.” As ILR dean she was for me an important informal barometer on how well our course offerings were meeting the needs of students. I still remember a time (in my first year or two as dean) when we were having unexpected problems fitting our course into our newly constructed classroom building. I couldn’t understand why I was hearing complaints so soon after the building was constructed, so I asked Ginny. Her response was something like: “Our new building does not have a classroom configuration that fits our academic program.” After that rather shocking revelation, I made it a point each year to “Ask Ginny” how well our program of courses was meeting student needs. And, I almost always heard something that I hadn’t heard from anyone else! Ed Lawler (ILR Dean 1997-2005)

- Ed Lawler, Ithaca Dec 3 2010

I started ILR with a plan to graduate in 3 years. Ginny always let me take all of the extra classes. In October of my sophomore year, I was struck with a huge back problem. I missed classes and when I could go, I’d have to lie down. I can still remember all the tests I had to take on that pseudo-couch in the front of the exam room. Ginny was so supportive that semester and I managed to complete everything. Unexpected surgery in January threatened to derail my 3 yr plan. The doctors told me to take a leave from school, even the school told me to give up on the plan. I was determined and Ginny said if you think you can do it, we’ll find a way. And she did. Her compassion and kindness throughout my time at ILR have never been forgotten. Were it not for her, I would not have graduated in 3 years. She was always upbeat, kind, and never seemed fussed by any of the chaos. As I know first hand, she went above and beyond for students. What a loss for the ILR community.

- Jenner Davis, Cook Islands Dec 3 2010

As a scared transfer into ILR in the Fall of 1983, I was full of apprehension and fear about being in and staying in the program at the ILR school. Ginny was the one person who reassured me that everything was going to be all right - that I was going to make it. She believed in me and that was hugely reassuring. She made me feel that I could come to her for anything I needed. Ginny made me feel that she was on my side. All of this meant (and continues to mean) so much to me. Ginny is someone I have always regarded with fondness in my heart. I will miss her. Condolences to Gus and the rest of us who will miss her. Regards, Brian Collins

- Brian Collins, Leawood, KS Dec 3 2010

Ginny was one of the first people I met at ILR during Cornell Days, and I was armed with a lot of questions. She took the time to find and clearly explain answers to me, and that remained constant throughout my college career.

- Matt Paulson, New York Dec 3 2010

In January 1995 I arrived at the ILR school as a transfer and “non-traditional” student. Fortunately for me, a new friend pointed me in Ginny’s direction. She not only took an unhurried approach to talking through my transfer credits and explaining the courses I would need to take, but provided reassurance and seemed to understand what it was like to return to a school campus after having been away for a long time. She was always someone you could go to with a question or for advice, and she had a way of always making you feel welcome, important to her, and cared for. I was deeply saddened to hear of her passing. She holds a special place in my heart as someone who helped me through a big life transition. Thanks Ginny, for taking such good care of all your students!

- Trina (Resch) Hendri, Lansdale, PA Dec 3 2010

My thoughts and prayers go out to the ILR School and Ginny’s family and friends at this time. Ginny was a great colleague and advocate for students. I enjoyed my 11 years working with her in the Office of Student Services and hearing the wonderful stories she told of former students, faculty and staff. She cared so deeply for so many, and it showed.

- Barry Taylor, Miami, FL Dec 9 2010

Ginny taught me about making the most of my time at ILR from the first conversation we had my freshman year during her lunch break. She helped take care of things when things fell apart my senior year. She told me about the garden she tended at her home and kept at her office, and the long driveway she would shovel everyday to get to OSS. Ginny’s lessons, and her devotion, will not be forgotten.

- Jon, PA Dec 9 2010

It’s hard to capture words that are worthy enough to express what Ginny Freeman has meant to me over the years. Ginny welcomed me with open arms when I joined the staff in OSS several years ago. But more importantly, is the friendship that evolved and remained intact many, many years later. Ginny’s warmth, energy, honesty, dependability, and generosity are only a sampling of traits that I remember her so dearly for. I’ll never forget you. Thank you, for being you.

- Jackie Dodge, Candor, NY Dec 10 2010

I had the pleasure of knowing Ginny as the Registrar when I was in grad school at ILR from 1985-87 and I ended up working with her when I returned to ILR in 2007, 20 years later. What is amazing is that Ginny would always get the job done, whether when I was a student asking her to enroll me last minute for a course, or now as an instructor who needs to do a favor for a student. Her first priority was always to help students and to “make it happen”. Her hard work and dedication were remarkable and she gave character to ILR. Thanks for teaching us all. Joe Grasso, December 12, 2010

- Joe Grasso, Skaneateles, NY Dec 12 2010

My sorrow at the loss of my dear friend and colleague, Ginny, is still much too fresh. Ginny touched so many lives and was loved by so many people. When a gifted person leaves us the hole is huge, however, Ginny left us a ravine and no matter how many years pass, it will not be filled. Our memories are golden and I will hold them in my heart and keep her family in my prayers.

- Ann Herson, Ithaca Dec 14 2010

I can't imagine that office without Ginny - she was a constant source of information and support for every student that walked through that door. I know the ILR community will miss her greatly.

- tl, New York Dec 16 2010

Ginny Freeman was my colleague and friend for many, many years. As a colleague, she was always supportive. In my earlier days, she would make sure that I would get my grades in on time and the rooms I needed. She brought a little systematic order into my world. I could always count on her calling me up and asking, "Where are the grades?" Or I would expect a phone call about a student who needed attention, or from time to time, I would get a bit of a brusque reminder that I was messing up, and being somewhat of a prince. In a few hours from now, I'm going to take off for the Christmas break, and I just got my grades in, and I just realized how I miss being able to call her and telling her, "Got them in." Ginny was also my friend. In a lot of ways, she's one of the people who helped me grow up in the ILR School. Whenever I needed a breather from our academic, professorial, corporate veneer, she was always there for a genuine reality check. I miss not having her around.

- Samuel Bacharach, New York Dec 23 2010

Ginny was the most knowledgeable person about everything in the ILR School. I missed her when she retired, and I miss her now in a sadder way. I still think of her every time I walk past Student Services.

- Caroline Hecht, Hector, NY Jan 3 2011

Where do I begin? I remain in shock over Ginny's passing. I had and will continue to have a deep level of respect and admiration for Ginny. I transferred into ILR from Arts and Sciences during my Sophomore year and Ginny was there every step of the way! She helped get me into courses and even offered advice for courses that I should take long after I was settled. I admired her knowledge, her passion for her job and helping students, and her ability to remain calm, cool and collected while the office was in chaos! I remember the last time I saw her. She had retired and was on the second floor outside lounge area of Ives. We spoke briefly. She was happy and peaceful. I will always remember her that way, in addition to being passionate, caring and an endless source of knowledge. She was a wonderful, caring person and she will be missed!

- Natasha Moses '11, Ithaca, NY Jan 12 2011

Although I didn't know Ginny as long as so many others in the ILR and Ithaca communities, I can say she was a very genuine person and a great co-worker and friend. She was real, down to earth and caring. And a lot of fun! She was always ready to listen and impart from her vast knowledge bank. It was obvious the impact she had on students, faculty, and staff alike. How many times did we hear, "Ask Ginny!"? It goes without saying she will be sorely missed from a professional standpoint, but so much more from a personal one, too. Heaven certainly got one amazing angel...

- Lorie Anderson, Athens, PA Jan 17 2011

Ginny's warmth, sincerity, and diplomacy was appreciated by students, staff, and faculty alike. She definitely had one of the toughest jobs in ILR but she was absolutely great at it (and could probably do it blind-folded with BOTH hands tied behind her back!). As a colleague in OSS, Ginny was a delight to work with: she was a great mentor, an ear when needed, full of wisdom, and although definitely diplomatic in approach - a straight-shooter when needed as well. She seemed to exude such a strong desire to help make students' lives easier and was absolutely LOVED by every single ILRie I ever worked with; she had such a great impact on the lives of students. I was very saddened to learn of her passing but will always, always remember her.

- Aisha Davis, NY Jan 19 2011

Ginny was such a sweet person, I had many a nice chats with her over the years. She was always busy and headed somewhere, but, that wouldn't stop her from asking how your day was going, and how your family was. She was a huge asset to ILR, and will be missed by all.

- Marcia Clark, Feb 24 2011

For over 19 years, I've had the pleasure of working with Ginny. She helped me to decide which times I should teach, when to offer certain kinds of courses, and how many students to expect.....and she was right most times with her predictions. Despite the many pressures on her in terms of faculty and student requests, she was always in a good mood.....and never seemed daunted in any way. She really loved her work too.....and that came through in many ways. Will remember her for these things, as well as her huge contribution to ILR.

- Sarosh, Ithaca Feb 24 2011

The Registrar of any college is, in a very real sense, at the hub of its educational activities: listing courses, finding rooms, enrolling students, recording grades, and keeping track of progress toward graduation. Ginny did all those things with great dedication for decades, touching every student and every professor who taught here in the decades she was in the job. All of us, numbering in the thousands, are in her debt for ensuring that the educational process was able to function smoothly. I hope she knew, at least to some degree, how large that debt is and how appreciative we all are.

- Robert Smith, Ithaca Feb 24 2011

When I started my academic side teaching, no part of our School told me what or how to do ...Everything was brand new to me, and at first, and cautiously, I sought out Ginny...She was pretty responsive, and then she warmed up to my wild and constant questions...She told me all about the ropes and more... Perhaps just as importantly, she imparted to me her deep love and concern for the students, which we shared...We could talk about those things in ways that helped me become better as a teacher...A couple of times a semester I would go to her office to ask a question, and maybe stay for an hour or longer...I never had an appointment, but she always welcomed me...We had a special friendship, a kind of mutual respect, that was cemented when I saw her one evening at the soft ice cream place outside of Trumansburg, "Your dads"...We had a lot of fun just chatting in a goofy way out there, while enjoying the best ice cream in town...I am very grateful for all of the ways that Ginny helped me, and I honestly believe that I might not have succeeded as a teacher at ILR without her constant help and love...I am so sorry for your loss...All my best...lee adler

- lee h adler, ithaca, ny Feb 24 2011

Ginny always amazed me with how well she knew each and every student. When students had problems, you only had to ask Ginny if there was something going on that you needed to know about. She was also always helpful in providing guidance to me on how ILR processes work, important since I teach only one course a year. I could always count on her for prompt and helpful responses on what to do and how to do it. No matter how busy Ginny was, even if I was an unexpected walk-in to her office, she always took time to provide advice. She touched a lot of lives and she will be sorely missed by so very many.

- Henry S. Kramer, Dryden Feb 24 2011

Ginny was the traffic controller of the school. Without her, our classes would have crashed into one another and the students would never have reached their destination. She knew everything about this university, and I depended on her even after I had been here twenty and thirty years. I also liked Ginny because she was always straightforward, reasonable, fair, and pleasant. I missed her the day she left, and I think I will always miss her.

- *Michael Gold, Ithaca Feb 25 2011*

While there are many great stories from her time at ILR, I am still convinced Ginny's most impressive accomplishment was getting any work done after I began working here. Like many students, staff, and faculty, I quickly learned that she was an incredible source of knowledge of all things Cornell. Day after day, Ginny helped me with one question after another until I became more comfortable advising students. No matter what I was working on, it was a great feeling to know that I had this amazing colleague and friend, someone who seemed to have more knowledge than Google and the patience of a monk. She would always take as much time as necessary to give me full answers and explanations, to help me learn and grow and understand my work better. I certainly miss our conversations, as many of my favorite moments at ILR have been sitting around with Ginny trading stories, jokes, and Cornell sports news. She made our lives easier and more enjoyable, and helped so many students reach their potential and get the most out of their time in college, something that will benefit them the rest of their lives. We are all so fortunate to have had so much time with Ginny.

- *Ian Schachner, Ithaca Mar 3 2011*