

# HISTORIC DEDICATION

*Nancy Roozée uses love for the past to drive local endeavors*

By MELISSA RUBALCABA RISKE | Photo by FROM ME 2 YOU PHOTOGRAPHY

**N**ancy Roozée says she finds the early American years interesting, from the historical stories to the period furniture and architecture. It's a simple love of the past that has continued to help Roozée wind down her career path, from running a local antique store to now managing a historical society and museum.

Roozée is the office manager for the McHenry County Historical Society & Museum located in Union. Her many tasks include coordinating volunteers, creating the nonprofit organization's financial books, producing a quarterly newsletter for society members, designing graphic materials, organizing school trips and research requests, and simply keeping the museum running day after day.

"She always steps up to the plate with whatever needs to be [done] and gets it done," says Kurt Begalka, administrator of the McHenry County Historical Society & Museum.

Begalka says he's known Roozée for a number of years - during the time she spent volunteering with the historical society's board and while she was undertaking her volunteer projects at the museum. He admires her hard work and her creativity, which has borne such events as an annual quilt contest and show and museum flash sales.

Roozée first connected with the historical society in the late 1990s, helping out with the organization's Heritage Fair auction. She was invited to

help price items for the auction, a perfect fit complementing her love of antiques. An avid antique shopper for her own home, Roozée decided to take it a step further and share her finds. In 1991, she opened The Crossroad Merchant on Riverside Drive in downtown McHenry, offering antiques and collectibles from the early 1800s through mid-century 1900. While running the store, Roozée became involved in the McHenry Downtown Business Association and served as the board secretary.

"McHenry is a great town," Roozée says.

When shopping trends began to shift in 2000, Roozée says she decided to close the shop.

"I thought I was ready for retirement," Roozée says. "I thought I would go do some gardening, learn to golf. But retirement didn't last. A new opportunity presented itself, and I felt confident and interested in doing it."

Roozée was invited to manage the auction committee and serve on the historical society's board of directors. She became the treasurer in 2007. Six years later, she was hired as the office manager and volunteer coordinator.

"My job is challenging," Roozée says. "It is filled with many different duties and activities, which



require constantly switching gears physically and mentally. I use a lot of Post-it notes!"

But along with her strong work ethic, Roozée also brings a love and appreciation for history. Being able to work at the museum and ensure future generations understand the past inspires Roozée's hard work.

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