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28 Years of Service with Karen Jenior

Karen Jenior has achieved 28 years and 2 months of service at Americhem working her way up from Front Office Secretary to Customer Service Representative to her current role as Buyer. Karen was hired on July 10, 1993 right out of high school as her first full time job. She spent over 20 years in Customer Service before she moved into the Purchasing department as a Buyer, which is her favorite position she has held so far. Her customer service experience is what has made her such a great Buyer today and how she has developed the ability to work between the 2 departments effectively.

To celebrate Americhem's 80 year anniversary, Karen was kind enough to be interviewed as one of Americhem's longest tenured employees. The dialogue was as follows:



Picture 1: Karen Jenior, 2021.

What was the field of plastics like when you first started?

The products that plastic goes into today is totally different than what it used to go into. When I first started at Americhem, our primary end applications were golf balls and then eventually vinyl siding. Seeing the industry and Americhem progress into all these new technologies to support industries such as healthcare, aerospace, and automotive is simply incredible.

What were some of the biggest challenges back then?

On a personal level, since this was my first job, getting into a routine and getting up for work was a major challenge and something to get used to. Learning not only the responsibility of going to work, but also learning the job itself was a challenging experience that all young people have to go through at some point.

What changes have you seen in plastics?

When I first started, our orders were all hand recorded on paper cards. You can see how far we have come now with how efficient our production has become.

What have been the greatest developments in the field of plastics over the last 28 years?

What we have done at Americhem Engineered Compounds, or AEC, is incredible with the way we support the medical industry. Going from making plastics that went into golf balls to now insulin pens is a truly remarkable achievement.

From your perspective, what would you say are Americhem's greatest accomplishments?

Our greatest accomplishment is that we are a fantastic company that still cares about our employees. Even when changes have been made, we have always had good people in place and kept the core values that I think are special. It feels like family here. The fact that we still do company picnics and annual bonuses gives employees the feel of a small family business even though we are a large global company now.

In your opinion, is there anything that Americhem should have done differently?

I can't say one thing they should have done differently. Every day of my job, all of the tools I use, I have learned from the people here who led me along the way.

What are some of your fondest Americhem memories?

We used to do this thing called Corporate Challenge where we competed in events like tug of war, swimming, or baseball. My team always killed it at tug of war; CJ was the anchor, then myself, then Judy and Doug. I remember looking over at the side line during our tug of war event and seeing the owner, Dick Juve, standing up and cheering us on. That meant a lot to me.

What are the key issues that you see Americhem addressing in the future?

I think working from home has made us realize that we don't need to be in the office to do a good job. We haven't missed a beat. I think I get more done at home because I can keep working past 5pm easily or start early because I don't have to get ready. With my mom passing away during the pandemic, I was able to work weird hours to still get things done. We have recovered from this being a weird situation to now being settled in and highly productive.

Please share one memory of a funny situation that you encountered at Americhem.

Gary Dale was Plant Manager at the time and everyone knows him as a jokester and quite a social butterfly. Well, back then we didn't have cell phones so if my family needed me, they would have to call the office. We were such a small team at the time that sometimes Gary would even answer the phone if he was around. Any time my mom called and Gary answered, he would start throwing out jokes immediately and get my mom laughing so hard. It's a funny memory that I'll always hold on to and cherish.



Picture 2: Karen (second from left) at wedding with her colleagues.

Describe what Americhem means to you.

Americhem has given me the means to provide for my family. They've also given me the confidence to know that I am always going to have a well-paying job and the support that I need when times are tough. It is hard to find the dependability and reliance that I get from Americhem in any other company in today's world.

Thank you Karen for your endless commitment to Americhem and your timeless friendship to many of us. We wish you continued success in your long standing career and look forward to your ongoing positivity you spread across the company.