

Butler Eagle – 1-17-2025 Butler County Bureau of Elections Honors Poll Workers

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Erma Mowry was honored by the Butler County Bureau of Elections during a poll worker appreciation dinner for her 58 years of service at the Highfield Community Center in Butler Township on Thursday, Jan. 16, 2025. Rob McGraw/Butler Eagle

BUTLER TWP — Erma Mowry generously buys nearly a thousand Tootsie Rolls in anticipation of election day for the hundreds of voters at the Penn Township precinct, where she works as a judge.

It's become quite the annual tradition for Mowry, who has 58 years of experience overseeing elections, making her the longest-tenured poll worker in the county.

"It's delightful," said Mowry, 79, in the midst of recalling all of her election day memories. "It's my day out to see the neighborhood. That's what you do. You get up at 4 a.m. in the morning and rush over to the polling place and right there are all your neighbors. It's wonderful."

Mowry was one of more than 100 local poll workers who were honored with an appreciation dinner hosted by the Butler County Bureau of Elections on Thursday evening at Highfield Community Center.

"I hope they know how valued they are," said Chantell McCurdy, the county's director of elections. "That's part of what this is for so they know how much they mean to this line of work, because we could not have elections without them."

It marked the first time local poll workers, many of whom are at or near retirement age, were recognized for their service. Before the dinner, county Commissioners Leslie Osche, Kim Geyer, and Kevin Boozel all spoke briefly and congratulated the workers for their dedication to the election process.

While going through records, McCurdy and her team found many of the workers from Butler County's 96 precincts had multiple decades of election experience. That prompted her to hand out dozens of achievement awards to workers who braved the harsh winter weather to be in attendance.

"We hope they have enjoyed their time as poll workers for the ones that are going to be retiring," McCurdy said. "And for the ones who are deciding whether they're going to rerun, we hope they do, and we hope they continue on with us."

Poll workers have had to overcome challenges in recent years — which included working through the COVID-19 pandemic and two hard-fought presidential elections involving President-elect Donald Trump.

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“Many of them (the poll workers) have been dedicated to this for many decades,” said Adam Price, a poll worker and precinct coordinator. “They are the real heroes in this, serving the people for 20, 30, 40, 50 years in some cases. The elections couldn’t happen without them. I just love being able to work with them and making sure everyone is well-trained for the election.”

Mowry, who began working elections at age 21 and has filled every conceivable role at her precinct, was one of four workers recognized for more than 50 years of service. The others are Harmony’s Margaret Kaufman, Mercer Township’s Sondra Buchanan, and Parker Township’s Susen Hilliard.

“This was wonderful because we’re all together,” Mowry said. “They all understand the adventure. And it is a great adventure setting up that polling place and, most of all, making sure every voter is treated royally.”



Butler County Commissioner Kevin Boozel thanks poll workers for their dedicated service during a dinner honoring them by the Butler County Bureau of Elections at Highfield Community Center on Thursday, Jan. 16, 2025. Rob McGraw/Butler Eagle

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Butler County Commissioner Leslie Osche, right, thanks poll workers at a recognition ceremony alongside fellow commissioners Kim Geyer and Kevin Boozel to honor poll workers at Highfield Community Center in Butler on Thursday, Jan. 16, 2025. Rob McGraw/Butler Eagle

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Butler County poll workers stood up to be congratulated as they were recognized for their service during a dinner honoring them by the Butler County Bureau of Elections at Highfield Community Center on Thursday, Jan. 16, 2025. Rob McGraw/Butler Eagle

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