

## Frances Roberts Retires as Director of Grant County Library

by Shannon Roy, Editor

Frances Roberts retired from the Grant County Library in Ulysses in December 2006 after 44 eventful years. Frances began working at the library in 1963, after she and her family moved to southwest Kansas from Texas. She became

the director in 1981. Frances had a background in journalism, which served her well in her library career.

Throughout her administration, Frances was known as a leader in library technology. The Grant County Library got its first computer in 1985 and the first computer lab just a few years later. The library has gone through several generations of library automation and the library staff is planning to go with Verso in April of 2007.

One of Frances's biggest dreams for many years was to have a beautiful new library facility. The community passed a bond issue in 2001. The library staff moved into the new library in January 2003. The new library was responsible for delaying Frances's retirement for quite some time. "I always thought I would retire at 65. But the new building wasn't finished. When it was finished, it was so nice that I couldn't leave. It has all been wonderful but it was never 40 hours a week; it's more like 24/7."

Even now, Frances will continue her commitment to the library. She will be working for the library part time, starting in February. She plans to build the Genealogy Department. She has also been asked to be the Librarian of her church.

But Frances is no workaholic. She loves to spend time with her brother and sister-in-law in Amarillo, with her children and with her seven grandchildren. She became a great-grandmother this year when two great-grandsons were born into the family. "I want to spend a lot of time with them."

"Right now, I am concentrating on reading, healthy eating, healthy living. I can't get interested in all the work the house needs, but I and my cat, Nernal, are very comfortable and she never complains. I also want to continue to see my colleagues and attend professional conferences."

Frances's successor will be Holly Mathes, who has worked for the library since 1992 and most recently was the Children's Librarian. Like Frances, Holly is a KPLACE graduate. She graduated in 1999, eight years after her mentor.

Holly lives in Ulysses with her husband. They have two grown children, several grandchildren and a lot of extended family in the area. "My favorite hobby would have to be reading. Everyone in my family reads! My grandchildren will sit on my lap for hours if I read to them. I like to motorcycle, too. Almost everyone in the family has motorcycles and we travel together in the summer and have great fun."

"I am excited by the opportunity to be the new library director. I have big shoes to fill, but I have had a wonderful teacher and



leader and I know Frances will be here to help me learn and succeed.”