

Tribute

In January, Air University (AU) Press and the US Air Force bid farewell to Nedra Looney, the lead Press production specialist and one of its longest serving civilian members. Nedra devoted 37 years to supporting the Air Force, Air Education and Training Command, and Air University, the final 16 of which were at the Press, where she helped the organization excel at its mission to promote US Air Force and US Space Force scholarship.

Nedra, a native of Clanton, Alabama, first interned with the personnel detachment at Maxwell Air Force Base (AFB) during her college years at H. Councill Trenholm State Technical College. After interning for the Air Force, Nedra was hired full time by the Montgomery Veterans Affairs (VA) office in 1986 as a clerk-typist in the accounting department, researching lost checks.

After a year in the VA accounting office, Nedra applied for and was hired to a position with the Air Command and Staff College (ACSC) at Maxwell AFB. During her years at ACSC, she was promoted through the positions of clerk-typist, secretary, and editorial assistant.

In 1995, Nedra was promoted to a higher-level editorial assistant position with the Air Force Institute for Advanced Distributed Learning (AFIADL) at Maxwell AFB-Gunter Annex. At AFIADL Nedra edited career development courses.

In 2007, Nedra was hired as a typesetter for Air University Press in support of the fledgling US Air Force scholarly journal, *Strategic Studies Quarterly* (SSQ). Upon retirement in 2024, Nedra's responsibilities at the Press included layout and production lead for books, papers, and journals. She retired as the Press' senior-most production specialist, having overseen the production of hundreds of influential books, papers, and journals.

Nedra holds an associate and applied technology degree in stenography from Trenholm State Technical College, and a bachelor of science degree in human services and technology management and an associate degree in general education from Troy University. She received several civilian and team awards during her 37 years of exemplary service, including the 2019 Air University Headquarters Civilian Category II of the Year.

Over the course of her career and as the computer age dawned, her work tools transformed from microfiche, double carbon paper, electric typewriters, and paper-based filing systems to digital computing. She witnessed word processors and floppy disks become cloud-based software computing and communication platforms. Despite these monumental changes, Nedra showed a consistent ability to adapt and master new tools and systems.



Former SSQ editor retired Colonel Mike Guillot, USAF, recalled, “It was my privilege to have Nedra as production manager/typesetter for SSQ for nine years. During this time we NEVER published a late edition. In fact, due to her efforts SSQ arrived early. Nedra’s warm personality and cheerful disposition made our working relationship mutually supportive.” Dr. Adam Lowther, vice president for research at the National Institute for Deterrence Studies and a former colleague at AU Press, said “Nedra is one of those people who always has a smile on her face and a kind word, even on the days she may not feel chipper. In all the years we worked together, I always admired her ability to keep a positive attitude even during the toughest of times. She was a pleasure to work with.”

Reflecting on her career, Nedra returned steadfastly to the importance of prayer and faith, declaring that when times were tough, she stood firm on Philippians 4:13: “I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me.” She emphasized her gratitude for the flexibility of the Air Force and of the friends she made over the years. Her next life chapter includes a shared retirement with her husband of 36 years, Wayne, supporting their sons, Joseph, a US Army captain, and Nicholas, an area manager with Amazon. Nedra and Wayne will continue working on their family cattle farm in Clanton.

AU Press—*Æther* (formerly SSQ) and ASOR (formerly *Air & Space Power Journal*) in particular—have benefited in untold ways from Nedra’s expertise, adaptability, willingness to learn, exhaustive patience, compassionate spirit, and encouragement, all accompanied by good humor evidenced by a ready laugh. These qualities were ever present, even in the stressful times of looming and passed deadlines, and when a certain editor requested yet another change to a table of contents, text, graphics, or a title. We will miss Nedra’s collegueship and her commitment to the mission. Even more so, we will miss her as a rock solid Air University Press team member.

~The Editor