

The Queen of the Castle

For four-plus decades, Rose Girouard has been serving table at BU

IF YOU WANT TO KNOW HOW to set up the BU Castle dining room for a wedding, ask Rose Girouard. How to properly greet distinguished visitors at BU President Robert A. Brown's door? Ask Rose. How to serve strawberries that met the exacting standards of the late University president John Silber (Hon.'95)? Ask Rose.

There's a reason her Dining Services colleagues call Girouard "the Queen of the Castle," although her realm extends well beyond the Bay State Road facility that's a favorite site for events and parties (and soon to be the new Dahod Family Alumni Center). The petite, impeccably coiffed Girouard has been an integral member of the waitstaff for 44 years, and "she knows every little thing—every system and every procedure," says Dining Services director Barbara Laverdiere.

Girouard has had plenty of time to learn, and the great-grandmother of three shows few signs of slowing down. "When someone asks if she's going to retire," says Laverdiere, "she says no, she's too young."

Girouard did her first Dining Services shift in 1971. A single mother of three young boys—her husband was killed in an accident just after the youngest was born—she had long been accustomed to making her way in the world.



Rose Girouard joined the Dining Services waitstaff in 1971 and has no plans to retire. "I take pride in what I do," she says simply. "I feel I do a good job."

She'd been a secretary at Household Finance and a lunchroom monitor in the Newton schools. A friend who worked at BU asked Girouard to join her on the waitstaff. "I said, 'No, I don't think I'd like that,'" she recalls. But the friend kept asking, and finally, Girouard relented. "I said, 'OK, I'll come, I'll come.' I just didn't want her to ask anymore." She's never looked back.

And while she's "Queen of the Castle" to her colleagues, she could equally be called "the server of Silber." She and Silber arrived at BU the same year, and Girouard personally waited on him, both at his residence and at University functions. Attending to the needs of the formidable and famously exacting president was not a job for the faint of heart, but the two clicked, and she has nothing but fond memories of the man she unfailingly refers to as "Dr. Silber."

"He was a wonderful gentleman whom other people did not know, and they don't recall him as so wonderful," she says, "but I think he was."

Girouard seems to have a knack for getting along with

others. Her gracious and welcoming manner has made her a natural at greeting party guests at the door as they arrive. "She knows every name, every trustee, all their dietary needs, every idiosyncrasy, and she never forgets," says Laverdiere. "She loves taking care of people, and she wants every guest to feel special. You can't train that."

She does have some pet peeves—chief among them a certain faux pas. "I don't like people who double dip," she says firmly. "That is a *bad* thing with me." And she's seen her share of odd behavior at the functions she's worked. "I don't like it when people put their rolls in their water glasses. I don't know why you'd do that."

The work is physically demanding, and although Girouard has scaled back her hours a bit, she's not making any plans for retirement just yet. When that day arrives, she says, she'd be very appreciative if a little party were thrown in her honor.

As if.

"That will be a party to rival Commencement," says Laverdiere. **JANE DORNBUSCH**

