



# EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

**Judy Ames**

Laboratory Manager



**Q. How did you start your career at ATL?**

**A.** I started my ATL career on August 25th, 1981, as a bituminous lab technician here in Canton. At that time our facility consisted of the “farmhouse” in front of our current building, and the barn where Thew Associates’ offices are now located. The only other ATL office was at Cicero, where Mark Wilbur had started the previous day.

**Q. What technical skills did you acquire that helped make you an expert in your position?**

**A.** We moved the bituminous lab equipment to Cicero in 1983 when they were awarded the NYSDOT contract. After that I became more involved with concrete and soil testing, both lab and field. We didn’t have nuclear density gauges in Canton yet, so soil densities were performed by the Sand Cone method, each test taking between 10 and 60 minutes. I also had my first exposure to a “nuke” that summer, when an engineer from Cicero and I did a Moisture Condition Survey on several roofs at a plant in Massena. In 1984, 22 ATL employees gathered in Syracuse for the first ACI Field Grade 1 certification. That is where Scott McCasland and I first met.

**Q. What projects that you worked on are the most memorable?**

**A.** When the Fort Drum expansion began in 1986, we did approximately 150 sieves and modified proctors in a few weeks. We each pounded 5 military proctors by hand per day, ATL didn’t have mechanical proctor hammers then. We challenged each other to race to keep up the momentum and productivity. We moved to this building in 1987, and Marijean set up the chem lab in the basement. We had a lot of fun working together and quickly became friends. I was promoted to Assistant Manager of the Canton Division in 1988 and worked with two other managers prior to Jim Kuhn becoming the manager here in Canton. He and I shared an office and performed geotechnical lab testing together until he moved to AT. The stories I could tell...

**Q. What resources did you use to expand your knowledge in your position?**

**A.** In 2002, I accepted the Division Manager’s position, co-managing with Tom Hunter that year as environmental services were integrated into the operating divisions. I had a lot to learn – Marijean, Tom, and Cheyenne took me on a Phase I Site Assessment, Marijean misbehaved the most. In 2012 there were two major fires in the area, which created a significant amount of work for Canton, and asbestos staff throughout the company. The Canton Division did over \$3,000,000 in revenue that year, it was an extremely busy time.

**Q. What do you like the most about the path your ATL career has taken?**

**A.** I managed the Canton Division until 2015, when Jim Trathen transferred from Watertown to Canton. Since then, I’ve been the Laboratory Manager, the last few years having the pleasure of working with the very competent people who will take over as I look forward to retirement this fall. I have been very fortunate, not only with my wonderful family, but also to have had a career that I enjoyed (most days) for 40 years. It seems the ultimate testimonial that my daughter has chosen to work here as well.