Our third most senior designer retiring is Mitch Zukowski. Mitch has 32 years here at Ford, hiring in in May 1985. Mitch was born in Aurora, Colorado, just outside of Denver. His family moved from there to Phoenix, Arizona when he was very young. Mitch’s mother had family in Michigan, so at age 4, Mitch moved with his family to Warren, Michigan. He graduated from Fitzgerald High School in Warren in 1983. Mitch was planning to attend Ferris State College for Frame Bending and Auto Body after high school, but was involved in a serious motorcycle accident during that summer when he was only 18 years old.

One night, while still recovering from his accident, he was watching Saturday Night Live when a commercial came on for Macomb Community College. It showed some car parts rotating on a computer screen and Mitch thought, “I could do that!” So he signed up at Macomb. That’s where he heard about the JTPA, Job Training Placement Agency. This agency was offering a deal where they would pay for 42 credit hours, gas, and tools if you could pass a test and place in the top 30. He took the challenge, and out of 400 competitors, while they were reading off names and he had his hand on the door to leave, he placed 7th! Mitch went on to earn a 4.0 at Macomb when Paul Gould put his hand on his shoulder and asked, “How would you like to work at Ford?” Mitch interviewed, got the job, served two co-op cycles and was hired in working under Lou Countegan! Yes, that’s Marty’s dad. Since then, he has worked under several supervisors including Jim Mitchie, Maria Rubley, John Fusco, and is now working for Greg Borchanian.

Mitch has been married to his wife, Sheila, for 25 years! He had a younger brother, who has passed, and has one niece. His parents have also passed, but Mitch does have a surviving step-mother, Connie. He has two step-sisters, Tammy and Sue, and a step-brother, Charlie, all out of state. Mitch also had a very dear dog, Missy, who has, too, passed after a very happy, long life. In retirement, Mitch plans to travel - - no more Michigan winters for him! He currently plans to go to Florida, Myrtle Beach, the Carribbean, and Las Vegas. He’s also looking forward to going on some cruises.

Mitch likes to dance, celebrate, gamble, and play video games. He promised Sheila that he would do more than play video games in retirement. Mitch works out every day and plans to work out two times a day when he retires. You may be surprised to know that Mitch had his water certification in scuba diving and used to do so in the Grand Caymen Islands. He was assisted by web gloves and other specialized equipment. He also enjoyed sit-skiing. He used to ski with a good friend who actually won a silver in the paralympics. Mitch says that mental is the only handicap, not physical. You have to have the ability to want to do something about your situation.