Our fifth senior retiree is Robert Mulka. Bob has 28 years here at Ford, hiring in in November 1989. Bob was born in Detroit and at the age of three, moved to and grew up in Garden City. He graduated from Garden City East High School in 1969. He attended Michigan State University for two years and then transferred to Eastern Michigan University. He earned a Bachelor of Science degree in December of 1973, specializing in secondary education with a major in history and a minor in economics.

Since teaching jobs were hard to come by (schools were laying off teachers with as much as 17 years experience and only hiring male teachers who also coached athletes), Bob found a summer job at J. L. Hudson Bakery. During this time, he met his wife, Sheila, while singing in the church choir and they married in 1976. He then worked at the J. L. Hudson Bakery as a Manager through 1977. After leaving that bakery, Bob worked at the Kroger Bakery in Livonia. He was there three months when he took a job at Sanders Bakery. There, he did inventory control for frozen dough and candy and scheduling for fresh baked goods. With so much experience and shifting from one baked good to another, Bob asked for a raise and Sanders would not give him one. So, Sheila, working at Ford Motor Company, suggested that Bob should become a Designer, “It’s a job that you can do and the designers made good money.” So, Bob went back to school.

Bob started at Henry Ford Community College in March of 1981. He earned his Associate Degree of Applied Science in Drafting Technology in 1983. His first job was at Aero Detroit Engineering working on the Ford Mustang SVO, hood and lamps. Next, he worked at Detroit Industrial Engineering and then at Damn Good Engineering. (As a note, each time someone changed jobs at the job shops, he/she lost medical insurance and had to wait 3 months got get coverage.) In the meantime, he also Graduated from Philpot Automotive Design in 1986. During this time, Bob applied multiple times to Ford - - since 1983. Finally, in 1989, Aubrey Pruitt called Bob and said, “We need you!” Bob hired in in November of 1989, finally finding the stability that he was looking for, since he and Sheila already had 3 children.

Bob’s first boss at Ford was Ken Beach. Bob worked on the Thunderbird Instrument Panel in Ken’s group. Since then, he has worked for 19 supervisors - - and was able to come up with nearly all of their names!! He is currently working for Navaneethan Palanisamy in Seat Structures.

Bob is a twin and has 2 brothers. He is the oldest of all 3. His twin, by the way, became a math teacher, and a coach, of course. You would be surprised to know that Bob was considering becoming a Catholic Priest and actually attended Sacred Heart Seminary high school for two years. He used to ride to and from the seminary with Sheila’s brother before he even met Sheila! Bob and Sheila have been married for 41 years. They reside in Livonia. They have three daughters and one grandson, three months old. His middle daughter, Christine, bought the home in Garden City where Bob grew up. What a great place to raise his grandson!! In retirement, Bob and Sheila plan to do a lot of traveling, including a trip to Italy in November. They will also help in caring for their grandson.