Dodson finds fulfillment in banking career

By Karma Champagne

MariDeB. Dodson had little foresight when she took a position as a note teller 37 years ago that she would one day hold the title of senior vice president of First National Bank of Jeanerette.

Dodson, who was recently recognized as Outstanding Professional for 1995 by the Jeanerette Chamber of Commerce, was the first woman to ever hold this position at First National.

"IN THE LATE 50s it was not very common for women to progress into higher positions. I had no idea that I would go this far," said Dodson.

Dodson is often looked upon as a pioneer of the bank serving as example that there is room for advancement for those who perform their job duties well.

As a senior vice president, Dodson works primarily with loans and has experience in all areas of banking. She serves as loan officer, loan supervisor, compliance officer, CRA officer, EDP supervisor in charge of marketing, disaster recovery and career apparel.

THE WORK has been a true challenge for Dodson who describes herself as people oriented. "I enjoy working with people and being available to help them," said Dodson.

"As a loan officer, it is rewarding to know that you've helped someone to fulfill a dream of owning their own home, buying a new car or (See DODSON, Page 5)

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simply carrying them through bad times."

Dodson stays just as active in the community as she does within her profession. She is a longtime member of the Jeanerette Chamber of Commerce and former vice president, past secretary and president of the Jeanerette Kiwanis Club and former president of the St. Joseph Home and School Association. She is an active member of St. John Evangelist Catholic Church and serves as lay eucharistic minister. She is also a member of the Jeanerette Community Relation Committee and Jeanerette Merchant Association.

"I consider it part of my banking responsibility to be active in the community and to do my part to work towards the betterment of Jeanerette," she said.

ALTHOUGH Dodson did not attend college, she seized every opportunity to advance in her field by attending all seminars and educational courses that were offered in the area.

She has completed courses at the American Institute of Banking at the University of Southwestern Louisiana and numerous seminars and short courses. Dodson is a graduate of the Louisiana School for Supervisory Training at USL and a graduate of Louisiana School of Banking at Louisiana State University and First National Banker's Bank School of Compliance.

"I was fortunate to move ahead without a college education, but I don't know if that would be true today. College education is the key," she said.

Dodson is not content with staying in her office and supervising. She enjoys hands on work and is quick to offer her help to pitch in for any department if there is an employee shortage or to do whatever is necessary to get the day's job accomplished.

DODSON SAID she was honored to be named Outstanding Professional of 1995. "It meant a lot to me to know that the community thought I was doing my job well," she said.

Dodson is planning to end her 37 year career in banking next year as she prepares for retirement. In her spare time, she plans to travel, stay active in the community and spend more time with her grandchildren.

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