

## *Staff Employee of the Week*

### **Christa C. Thomas**

**JOB TITLE:** Graduate Program Coordinator

**HOME DEPARTMENT:** Physics

**COLLEGE OR VP AREA:** College of Science

**NOMINATED FOR:** President's Award for Excellence and Governor's Award for Career Achievement

**NOMINATED BY:** John H. Simonetti, Associate Professor, Physics

**VIRGINIA TECH HIRE DATE:** December 22, 1975

### **SUMMARY**

Over the course of her more than 30-year career in the Physics Department at Virginia Tech, Chris Thomas has been the essential soul of the department's graduate program. Her actions go well beyond the duties and expectations for her various job titles, as she cares for all the graduate students both physically and emotionally. She has been especially important to the many international students who have come across the globe to learn and work at Virginia Tech. Students describe her as "a parent away from home" or "mother to us all." What else would you call a staff member who drives students to their distant doctor's appointments, or the emergency room -- day or night, cares for ill students in her own home, takes students without a car to buy groceries, helps students with roommate disputes, picks them up when their cars breakdown, and acts as their public advocate and private counselor. She is quick to respond with good cheer and humility whenever a student, or any department member, has a problem. It is Chris's natural calling to help -- simply because someone needs help -- and it is truly inspiring.