NEWS RELEASE

Straight to the Gate: Cheryl Briesemeister

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For 38-years, Cheryl Briesemeister has been a part of the American Airlines family. Actually, as Cheryl tells it, it was family that influenced her to join American in the first place. Her mother was in the airline industry, and Cheryl knew she wanted to follow in her mother's footsteps.

"I was just 19-years-old. My mom was a supervisor for Delta," she said. "I grew up on the airlines. When I was in the middle of college, I interviewed with American and TWA, and I got hired by both."

Cheryl decided to join American because she and her mother would be working side-by-side in Chicago. At that time, the Delta terminal was next to American.

"That's how I ended up with American in 1978. The first thing I did with American was the food area — Sky Chef," she said.

And for the past 38-years, Cheryl has worked in different areas across the airline, from reservations and ticketing to concierge and Premium Customer Service. She even spent time assisting passengers in wheelchairs and helping unaccompanied minors.

In 1990, Cheryl made a big move. She relocated to Miami to open the first Admirals Club at MIA. She's called the Sunshine State home ever since. In her current role in Premium Customer Service, she goes above and beyond to help American passengers.

"Cheryl epitomizes hospitality in its truest form because of her genuine love of her job in Premium Customer Services, " said Patsy Yuen-lyn, Senior Manager, Premium Customer Services.

When she thinks about the people she has encountered throughout the years, a regular MIA customer comes to mind. Gratefully, she was the person to assist him on a very difficult day.

"He walked in and I said, 'Are you okay?'" she remembered. From the look on his face, she knew that he wasn't. He told her that he was coming in from Panama, when he received an urgent call. His beloved father-in-law had had a heart attack. "He said, 'My wife is going to be so devastated … and he's like my daddy,'" Cheryl said. Cheryl didn't hesitate, she immediately asked him what he needed and got to work.

Chery booked the passenger's wife on a flight from Tampa to Miami and then Miami to Panama so she could see her father. Cheryl said she was doing her job, but it was Cheryl's familiar face and empathetic nature that comforted the passenger that day. About six months later, Cheryl said she saw the family passing through the terminal on their way to Panama. Unfortunately, the passenger's father-in-law had passed, but she was glad she was able to help during such a difficult time.

Helping customers and her fellow team members is why Cheryl isn't in any hurry to retire even when people ask her if she's ready to start taking it easy. "I tell them that I love what I do. I actually enjoy making people feel special because that makes me feel special, too."