

letters S.A.L.E. on them worn by many of the custodial workers stand for, "Sanitary, Attractive Learning Environment."

She laughs when asked if

"Students are leaving early" was another way of interpreting the button.

"Yes indeed," she says, "that was the joke."

She says students in the first

floor lounge of Harrington Tower rarely get in her way.

"They move out of your way and let you work," she says.

"Nobody gets in anybody's way."

"All the people in this building are very nice. I haven't run into any nasty people yet."

Ola Mae Moore started working in the Memorial Student Center in 1959.

She says there have been plenty of changes in the MSC since she began. She recalls the original building with only 33 guest rooms (it has 63 now) and very little other space.

"But you'd have to talk to Mr. J. Wayne Stark about all that," she says. "He's the one who got all this started."

Moore's title is custodial worker II. For the past nine or 10 years she's cleaned the bowling and games area of the basement, she says. But she started out cleaning the guest rooms and has cleaned just about every part of the building in the past 28 years.

She says the guest rooms didn't have carpets, thermostats or televisions in 1959.

"I could tell a whole lot of things," she says. "I've seen a bunch in 28 years. But I don't know, if I talked about what I've seen — they might get upset."

Until the early '70s the black custodial workers were not allowed to eat lunch in the main cafeteria, even though blacks worked as cooks in the MSC.

"Now we all get to eat together," she says.

Moore, who was born in Burleson County, has four grown children.

She says she cleans house for her supervisor one or two times a month to earn a little extra money.

David Gentry, Joe Mendez and Ron Trejo all clean and set up rooms for meetings in the MSC and Rudder Tower. They work the 2-11 p.m. shift.

Gentry, an assistant foreman, says the work is all right.

"It takes a lot out of your social life by working nights and

weekends," he says, "but it's a job."

Gentry says the salary is just enough to pay the bills.

"As far as saving and all that goes, you can't save a fortune out of your check," he says.

All three men have children — Gentry has three, Mendez has one and Trejo has two.

They say second jobs help make life easier.

Gentry used to work at Whataburger, but had to give that up because he needed to devote more time to his children. Mendez still works at Whataburger and with his brother in construction. Trejo works with his father in a new landscaping business.

They all have plans for the future, too. Trejo says he hopes the landscaping business will be successful. Gentry says he wants to work for the Texas Department of Corrections, and Mendez wants to work as a warehouse manager — he wants a nine-to-five job.

Gentry also has hope for the future of his children.

"The way I look at things, maybe ten years from now I'll have a young superstar coming up," Gentry says, "and I won't have to work."

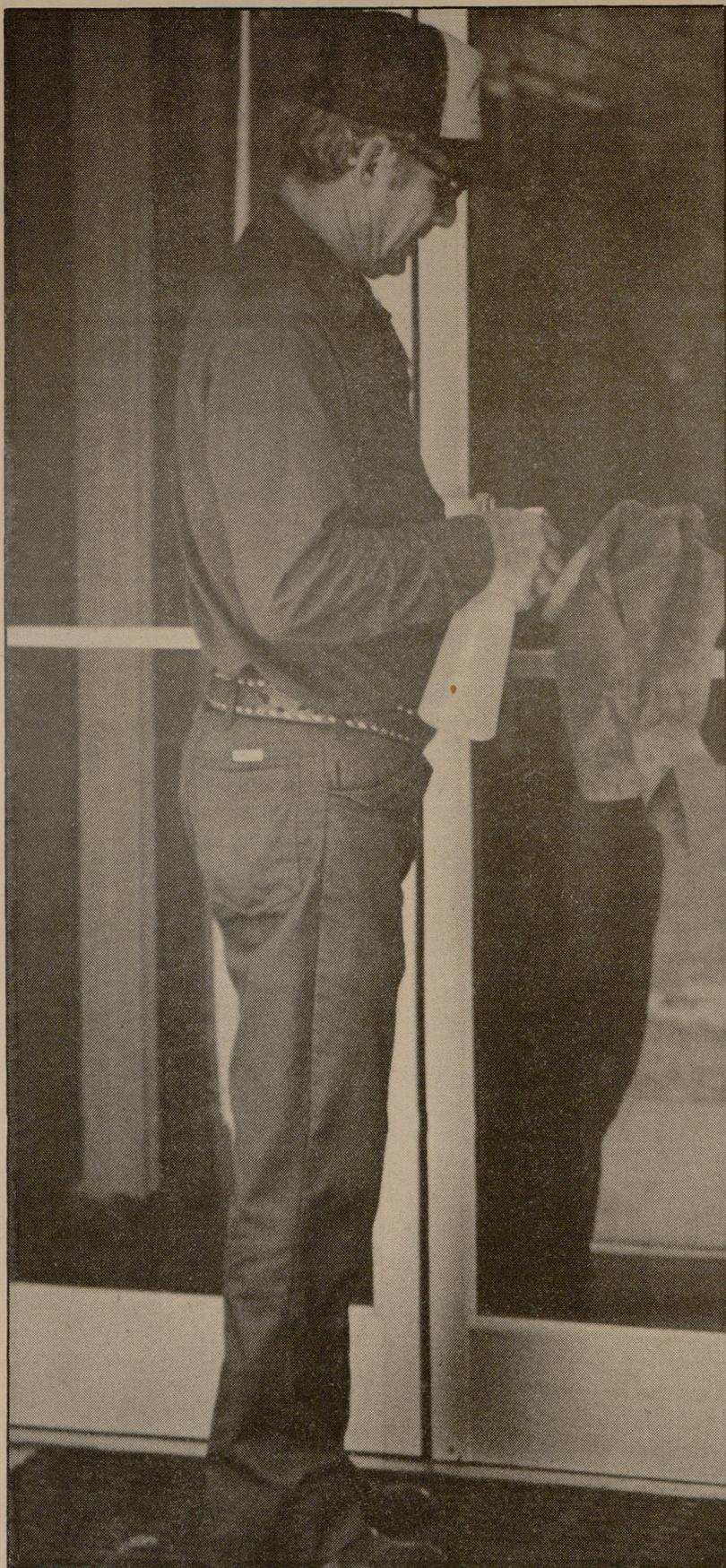
"Even if he's a writer or a teacher or something. My oldest girl, she loves school. She's about an 'A' student."

These are just a few of the people we never notice. Behind the shrubbery. Behind the mop. Behind the counters. And behind the tables and chairs.

Grounds maintenance has 120 full-time workers. The physical plant employs about 1,100 people. Food services has up to 750 full-and part-time workers during the fall and spring semesters, and the University Center has 90 full-time employees.

We often don't notice them, but A&M couldn't operate without the valuable services they provide.

As you rush to class, smile at the behind-the-scenes people. Take time to appreciate the jobs they do.



Custodial worker Paul Karkoska cleans a door in Hart Hall. He is in charge of ramps A through E.