

Bill is the chief financial officer of a small liberal arts college that is under economic pressures. Among the small staff of administrators with whom he worked closely was Maude, a single woman in the comptroller's office whose loyalty to the school knew no bounds.

In twenty years of service, she had held a number of different positions. Yet she never quite proved suited to any of them. Bighearted with her colleagues and careful in her tasks, she was nevertheless a slow, deliberate worker, unable to grasp the newer technologies and easily flustered by changes in routine. Bill had several conversations with her about her work, each ending in tears on her part.

He knew that six years away from retirement, she had little accumulated savings and no family. Her life seemed completely wrapped up in the school. Bill was also aware, however, that with increasing costs and a leveling of enrollments, he had to make adjustments to his staff. It was clear to all involved that Maude's work could be nearly eliminated by new computer equipment. It was also clear that there was no obvious position into which she could be moved, and that her salary was a significant drain on the budget.

Question: What happened to Maude?

Answer: Maude decided to take a phased retirement and transferred to the alumni office for her final three years before retirement, where she worked on outreach to alums.