For Mary Reinertson-Sand, the University of North Dakota is much more than just a place to work. When her son, Taylor, comes to UND in the fall of 2010, he will be the fourth generation of the Reinertson family to go to school here.

“UND is more to me than just a job,” she said. “It’s part of my life, part of my family.”

Reinertson-Sand was born and raised in Grand Forks and graduated from Central High School. She earned bachelors degrees from UND in elementary education and library science. She decided she wanted a change when it came time to earn her master’s degree in library science, so she headed to the University of Alabama for school.

“I just wanted a complete culture shock, and I got it,” she said.

Already married to her husband, Tom, also a graduate of UND, Reinertson-Sand commuted back and forth between her husband in Grand Forks and her master’s program in Alabama. It would prove to be the only time she lived anywhere but Grand Forks.

“I love the Midwest,” she said. “I’m very much a Midwestern girl.”

Reinertson-Sand’s first real job out of college came in 1984 at the Grand Forks Public Library, where she worked behind the circulation desk. In June 1985, she came to UND.

“I was going to do a couple years, and here we are,” she said with a smile.

Her first position was as the geology librarian from 1985 to 1990. From 1990 to 2002, she worked at the College of Nursing and was manager of the Learning Resource Center. In January 2003, she went to the Center for Rural Health (CRH) as an information specialist. For the first five years, she worked with the CRH’s Rural Assistance Center project. Now she’s at the Health Workforce Information Center, an online library for resources on health workforce that is free of charge for anyone in the United States. This particular project started in October 2008. Reinertson-Sand, along with other information specialists, responds to phone calls and requests for information.

“I just never thought that when you went to library school that technology would change so much that you’d be doing everything online,” she said.

When she first started in the field, librarians shelved books, and people wrote their names on cards to check out books. “I’ve almost had to relearn my profession,” she said. “The Internet wasn’t even invented when I went to grad school.”

But Reinertson-Sand has been up to the challenge. She even earned the Meritorious Service Award when she was working in the geology library. And she obviously continues to love her work today.

“I like the variety,” she said. “I guess the reason I’ve been here 25 years is the variety of opportunities and challenges, the people, and the benefits are excellent.”

Reinertson-Sand said she’s had wonderful bosses throughout the years and appreciates all UND has offered her. When she needed a flexible schedule, UND accommodated that. When she left Grand Forks for a month because of the 1997 flood, she was amazed that UND still paid everyone. And with a son ready to start school at UND in the fall, she also will be able to take advantage of the tuition break offered to children of employees.

“It’s like a thank you to staff,” she said.

She also appreciates the campus itself. She said there’s nothing like the excitement in the fall when the campus is full of new students. And she loves the spring
as well. She always takes a lunch hour to walk around the campus, walk by buildings she
doesn’t normally visit, and along the way enjoy the landscaping.

In her free time, Reinertson-Sand enjoys painting, crocheting, her pets, and her family. Her husband, Tom, is a captain in the Grand Forks Fire Department, and their son, Taylor, who will graduate from high school this spring, works at WDAZ. Reinertson-Sand said her dad, Bob Reinertson, also is a big part of her life. He graduated from UND and was a teacher in Grand Forks for many years.