William James, the father of American psychology once said “The deepest craving of human nature is the need to be appreciated.” People want to know that they matter, that their contributions have not gone unnoticed and that they’re making a positive impact.

All these things are absolutely true when it comes to Administrative Professionals. It’s our incredible honor to shine a bright light on Administrative Professionals and their invaluable contributions to their companies through The Admin Awards program. As the proud daughter of an Executive Secretary, it’s my tremendous honor to recognize people like my Mother, Jeannette Castellano, who have dedicated their careers to serving as the backbone of their organizations.

As we continue our mission of bringing unbridled recognition of Administrative Professionals to cities across the U.S., we are deeply grateful to those that have taken the time to show their appreciation by participating in the nominations process. We are reminded again and again that the moment an Admin receives notification that they’ve been nominated for an Admin Award, is the instant that both their heart and mind fully know that the work they’re doing is truly making an impact - a moment which could not happen without the support of their executives and coworkers.

While each Admin Awards program produces an incredibly impressive list of finalists and winners who stand out from their peers in each of our award categories, more importantly, the Admin Awards bring joy to thousands of people each year and that is the very best part of all of this.

With gratitude,

Sunny Nunan
Founder of The Admin Awards & Daughter of an Executive Secretary
Seema currently serves as the Clinical Research Manager at UT Southwestern Medical Center in the Anesthesiology and Pain Management department. She enjoys the challenge of merging creativity and business acumen in day-to-day operations. Her inclination to make a difference and interest for all facets of management are at the root of her passion for administration. Seema is a native of Louisiana where she received her Master of Public Health degree in Health Policy and Systems Management from LSU Health Sciences Center. Prior to working in Dallas, she spearheaded various efforts to increase business growth and sustainability for her company. Seema led initiatives with New Orleans city leaders in revolutionizing access to healthcare and improving health outcomes – simultaneously reducing Emergency Room utilization rates and costs to the city.

Colleen Barrett: Servant Leader and Superstar

When The Admin Awards was launched in 2012, we sat down with Colleen Barrett to ask her for her thoughts and experiences on the administrative profession. Her answers from that September interview, edited for brevity; are below:

What did you like most about being a secretary?
I like to serve so you have to start there. I loved to solve problems. And I loved to give exemplary or positive customer service delivery on behalf of whoever I was working for. Life is all about relationships … you have an opportunity in the administrative group to form more relationships than probably any other position — even much higher up on that so-called ladder because you are very often that first point of contact with the outside world or the customer…life is just one big grassroots campaign as far as I’m concerned.

What did you like the least?
I didn’t like anything that was routine. I loved to master projects, but, for example, filing was only interesting to me because I loved to be able to find anything that anyone was looking for … I’ve never liked rote work. (But) there’s some that goes in every job no matter what position you’re in.

What was the most challenging aspect of serving Herb Kelleher?
Being a nanny for 45 years for a man who has always thought he was 17 regardless of any year that was added to his personal calendar! Herb is 87 and so on to be 88 and he’s going on 17. I’m 74 going on 90 because Herb is 87 going on 17. He’s a great servant leader. He loves life and you almost can’t be around him and not catch that love of life and love of people. He’s constantly learning.

And the best aspect?
It was truly feeling his egalitarian spirit and appreciating the fact that he valued my judgment and thinking as a team member.

Did you ever think you would rise from Secretary to President and COO of Southwest Airlines?
Quite honestly it wasn’t something I wanted, and I never wanted to be CEO — and I made that very clear to the Board—that isn’t my strength. My strength is customer service and people and everything that touches people, and, honestly, being President and CEO wasn’t my favorite position at Southwest…my favorite position was Executive Vice President- Customers. Customer to us means employees, passengers, and shareholders, so I could really touch everything. I could touch every department. And as President…I had to do a lot more external things…I did them…I can’t say I hated them…(but) I like to get down and dirty and really roll up my sleeves.

What advice do you have for Admins?
Love. Everybody. Just love. It’s a word that corporate America doesn’t use very much…always remember where you came from — so that you know how far you’ve come…I don’t think most of us start out thinking we’re going to be the President of the United States or the CEO of a company… and I think…be humble and appreciate what you get. To me psychic satisfaction is 10 times more important than pay or title. Be authentic. Be real. Remember who you are.
ELLEN LARIMORE FREEMAN
SENDERO CONSULTING

Joining the Administrative team at Sendero in the Fall of 2017, Ellen Larimore Freeman is primarily responsible for supporting the firm’s Senior Leadership team and managing administrative demands across all functions of the firm, including consulting, talent management, finance, and marketing. Additionally, she is an active contributor to Sendero’s Marketing Committee, developing internal and external content to enhance Sendero’s brand. Prior to Sendero, she spent five years in non-profit operations, overseeing events, marketing, and public relations for the Burleson Area Chamber of Commerce. Ellen has a passion for helping others, especially children. In her spare time, she loves to create and DIY craft with her Cricut machine, host game nights with friends, and spend time with her new husband and their Labrador Retriever, Hallie.

MARGIE LUNA
SOUTHWEST AIRLINES

Margie Luna has worked Administrative roles since 1971. At a Dallas law firm, her duties included answering the phone, greeting clients, lawyers, and maintaining the staff’s docket calendar and library. At multiple insurance companies and a plastics manufacturing company, also in Dallas, she performed similar duties. In 1996, she joined Southwest Airlines in the Reservations Department helping Customers with flight and rental car reservations. As a Customer Care Representative, escalated Customer ticket issues and Spanish-speaking Customers were transferred to Margie. After 18 years on a 24-hour help line for Employees (Internal Customers), the opportunity arose to work at the front desk for the Executive Office. She is happiest welcoming visitors and extending Southwest Hospitality, supporting the Executive Office Staff, and participating in volunteer projects serving the community with her Team. Margie and her husband, Fernando have been married 45 years, and have four children and seven grandchildren.

Congratulations to our Dallas Administration Awards Finalists

Kassandra Johnson
Shelia Jernigan
Rafael Hernandez
Seema Dave

KFC

Congratulations
TO ALL OF THE
ADMIN AWARD FINALISTS,
ESPECIALLY OUR OWN
EVELYN HALL

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Congratulations
Maria!

Your team
at CyrusOne
is proud of you!

CyrusOne.
Kassandra is a native of Dallas and began her administrative career more than 20 years ago as a legal secretary, supporting attorneys practicing law. She subsequently worked in other businesses, where she moved from administrative support roles into management as a result of her natural ability to solve problems and deliver excellent customer service. She brought highly developed skills and a natural ability to enhance and elevate the workplace environment with her positive attitude and dedication to serving others. Kassandra has since been promoted and she continues to support the executive team’s ability to ensure the delivery of exceptional patient care. Her warm, calm, and cheerful demeanor makes a consistent positive difference in the lives of her coworkers, leaders, patients, and guests.

Karen Shuman is a Senior Executive Assistant at DFW International Airport. In her current role at DFW International Airport, Ms. Shuman is responsible for supporting the Chief Executive Officer. She has been with the airport for over 13 years holding various executive-level support positions after joining in 2005. Prior to her role at DFW International Airport, Ms. Shuman worked at the law firm of Benolken & Everett, P.C. from 2002 – 2005 as a Legal Assistant/Office Manager. She also worked at Citigroup (formerly The Associates) in a variety of executive assistant roles from 1978 - 2001, her last position supporting the Senior Executive Vice President of the Credit Card Division. Ms. Shuman is a native Texan having lived her entire life in the Dallas Fort Worth area. She is married and lives in Flower Mound, Texas with her husband Chris. She has two children, Daniel and Taylor, and one granddaughter, Emma. She earned her Associates in applied sciences degree as a legal assistant at Tarrant County Community College in Hurst, Texas.

Congratulations to all the nominees and winners.
**WINNER**

**TERIE TRI**
**EPSON**

Terie Tri always knew that assisting others was her calling in life, so being in the administrative field is exactly where she belongs. In 2016, she joined Epsilon to provide administrative support to 12 Vice Presidents and Senior Vice Presidents. Since then, she has often been referred to as the “chaos coordinator” by those she supports because she always makes sure all administrative tasks are completed accurately and efficiently with a positive and friendly disposition. In addition to her administrative role at Epsilon, Terie also volunteers as Communications chair for the international company-wide Community Outreach committee. In this position, she is constantly reaching out to inform and encourage associates to donate their time and resources to charities that are near and dear to their heart. In her spare time, Terie can be found cooking for her family, cuddling with her fur babies, volunteering, or playing board games with friends.

**WINNER**

**JO ABILA**
**PIONEER NATURAL RESOURCES**

Jo Abila began working for Pioneer Natural Resources in 2015 as an office services representative in the facilities department, where she gained substantial experience in coordinating corporate events and travel arrangements for our Midland operations. Jo quickly became recognized by her colleagues as an employee with a positive attitude, strong work ethic and someone willing to go the extra mile. When an administrative professional position opened in operations, there was no one better qualified for the job. Jo hit the ground running and hasn’t looked back. Jo enjoys working with her Pioneer team and for her manager, Barry Portman, who’s the vice president of Permian operations. She continues to go above and beyond with a smile every day. Not only is she a full-time administrative professional, but she’s also a student at Midland College, where she’s pursuing an associate degree in business administration. Outside the office, Jo enjoys going to the lake and spending time with family and friends.

**WINNER**

**MELANIE LENAHAN**
**SABRE**

Melanie Lenahan joined Sabre in 2013 as an Executive Assistant. For the last 2.5 years Melanie supported the Chief Marketing Officer and Senior Vice President for Sabre Airline Solutions and the global Marketing and Solutions Management team. She was instrumental in promoting the Sabre Culture across the global team through employee engagement. Melanie introduced a peer to peer Emmy recognition program for the global team. As well as planning team birthdays, lunches, cookouts, Holiday and Christmas in July event and Gift Basket Raffles. She is very dedicated to those she supports by being proactive and works quietly behind the scenes to get the job done. Melanie has recently accepted a position outside of Sabre, she will be greatly missed but her recognition programs will be continued across the global team.

**CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR FINALISTS!**

Jenny Hitt  
Susan Green  
Jo Abila
DeeDee serves as the Executive Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent of Schools of the Dallas Independent School District. Since 2007, she’s held this critical and vital position in the 5th largest school district in the nation through the tenures of four superintendents. DeeDee joined Dallas ISD in 1998 working at the campus level. This experience provided her with the perspective of what actually happens on a day-to-day basis in a district with over 221 schools, 20,000 employees, and over 156,000 students. DeeDee, the 2013 recipient of the Bayard H. Friedman HERO Award for the most Outstanding School Administrative Assistant in North Texas, serves as the liaison between the superintendent and staff, civic leaders, elected officials and community members. DeeDee and her husband Ron have three children, Sarah, Anthony and Claudia. She is the devoted grandmother of two boys, 12 and 13 years old, 5-year-old twin girls and a newborn girl.
In its 45th year of service, Dallas-based Southwest Airlines continues to differentiate itself from other air carriers with exemplary Customer Service delivered by more than 49,000 Employees to more than 100 million Customers annually. Southwest proudly operates a network of 97 destinations across the United States and seven additional countries with more than 3,900 departures a day during peak travel season. With 43 consecutive years of profitability, Southwest is one of the most honored airlines in the world with an emphasis on performance and productivity, the importance of its People and the communities they serve, and an overall commitment to efficiency and the planet.

Swarovski delivers a diverse portfolio of corporate gifts featuring premium crystal products that have elevated the gift giving industry to an art form. The company takes pride in designing thoughtful, appropriate business gifts to suit every occasion, including customizable pieces that express sentiments with grace and sophistication. Founded in 1895 in Austria, the Swarovski Crystal Business is run by fifth generation of family members and remains the global leader for cut crystal, known for its cutting-edge creativity and innovation.