

HOUSTON | MARCH 31 | 2023

ADMIN AWARDS[®]

THE ADMINISTRATIVE PROFESSION'S
HIGHEST HONOR



NATIONAL PARTNERS



A LETTER FROM THE ADMIN AWARDS



The 2023 Houston Admin Awards celebrates the amazing spirt, heart and expertise of the country’s intrepid Administrative Professionals.

As I reflect on the evening and attending my first Houston Admin Awards Gala, I feel compelled to identify the common denominator, the thread that runs through

this honorable endeavor to celebrate the most important group of professionals. It’s generosity. The hundreds (thousands) of examples of this is what makes my job such a pleasure to do.

First, the generosity of the amazing Houston Advisory Board. These passionate Admins, who already shoulder the burden of their intense jobs, family obligations and life’s curveballs, selflessly spend many hours of their own time advancing our mission to ensure that every Admin doing excellent work can be recognized through the Admin Awards program. They are our VIP’s, and we love them dearly.

Secondly, the generosity of extremely busy Executives and teams positively impacted by their Admins’ great work, who take time out of their busy schedules to write thoughtful nominations and attend the Gala. Their generosity in contribution of time and resources ensure that their Nominees, Finalists and Admins feel their support and admiration.

The generosity of our independent Board of Judges, including the Colleen Barrett Institute, who volunteer many hours to evaluate nominations and determine our Finalists and Winners. They take the judging process very seriously and agonize over their decisions as they evaluate all nominations.

The generosity of our Sponsors, who not only provide critical funding that enables the Admin Awards to thrive, but all the additional things they do “just because” they believe so strongly

in our mission and the value of Administrative Professionals. From helping us raise awareness, and nominating, to providing prizes, they reach well beyond their own business interests in their many contributions. We are so fortunate to have a strong family of long-term Sponsors who demonstrate their passion in so many unique ways.

Most importantly, Administrative Professionals are generosity personified! It shouldn’t surprise us that their very nature inspires generosity in all who are impacted by them. Though it is likely not written into any job description, Admins are inherently generous with their time, hearts, and actions. Every day, we encounter Admins with amazing credentials, who are prime candidates for being nominated, who are much more focused on having their peers recognized than they are on themselves. It has always amazed us that Admins are as enthusiastic to see one of their peers in the spotlight as they are if the light is being shined on them. This attribute of generosity is no more pronounced than with Administrative Professionals and it inspires and motivates us every day!

From the entire Admin Awards organization, congratulations to this year’s Nominees, Finalists and Award Winners, you deserve your time in the limelight! And thank you to everyone who made this evening possible – the Houston Advisory Board, the Board of Judges, busy Executives and their teams and our wonderful Sponsors. We are forever grateful for the copious amounts of generosity that bring us together and enable us to honor and celebrate Houston’s Administrative Professionals!

Ellynn Adoue
VP of Strategic Partnerships

2023 JUDGES

Margarita Villagran Doris USA Inc.	Robyn Thorn Remington Hotels	Carmen Martin Serene Solutions	Laura Jakubik TAMU
Lauren Zachry Medical Edge Recruitment	Sharon Bell Retired	Pam Gerber The Fibroid Institute of Dallas	Kathy Cannon Juniper Networks
Kenneth Williams Kenneth Craig Worldwide	June Wideman Retired	Sherry Parsons Retired, Cisco	Judy Champion Retired

2023 ADVISORY BOARD

Katrina Ajay ADP	Linda Cao Texas Chidren's Hospital	Lynn Smith (formerly Boyd) Higher Dimension Church	Ashlie Lopez Robert Half
Jessica Bazan MD Anderson	Brooke Dedmon Alera Group	Antoinette Smithson MD Anderson Cancer Center	Leah Cooley Marsh McLennan Agency - Houston
Charrie Bradshaw Forthea Interactive	Sajal Javid Alley Theatre	Sara Steed Beacon Offshore Energy LLC	
Casey Bushek ALI	Harriet Sharrard Hess Corporation	Stacy Williams HP	
Michelle Bynum Legacy Community Health	Shea Smith Cheniere Energy	Amanda Wilkerson Robert Half	

COLLEEN BARRETT AWARD FOR ADMINISTRATIVE EXCELLENCE

LORNA DEARMOND

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT LEAD IV,
KBR/NASA

WINNER



As Administrative Assistant Lead IV at KBR, Lorna DeArmond not only embodies all the qualities of a great Admin but inspires those same qualities in the Admin team she leads. She has supported the Human Space Flight program for 17 years and models the five keys of the Johnson Space Center Flight Operations Division Foundations of Flight Operations credo including discipline, competence, confidence responsibility and teamwork. She is always available to offer guidance or advice, whether for one of her Admins or a fellow Admin, and takes pride in sharing her knowledge and helping fellow team members. Additionally, Lorna publishes an Admin newsletter that offers insight into the skills essential to being a great Admin, and she created and leads the MSOC Admin Study Group that to date has delivered over 17 hours of skills training to Admin teams across the Human Exploration Division departments. "Loyal Lorna is dedicated to all who truly make NASA work," her colleague said, "and without them we would never make it in space, never reach for the stars — and for the most part, many of us would be a complete wreck."

FINALISTS



Kari Aguirre
Tokio Marine
HCC



Elizabeth Longoria
Harris County
Sheriff's Office

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 whomever 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! He was a great servant leader. He loved life and you almost couldn't be around him and not catch that love of life and love of people.

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 COO—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 COO 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.

LEADERSHIP AWARD

FINALISTS



BRANDEE MIRELES
ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT,
CHENIERE ENERGY

In her role as Administrative Assistant at Cheniere Energy, Brandee Mireles is viewed not only as a true partner, but as the glue that holds the entire team together. Her influence can be seen in the way she has helped to streamline processes and improve productivity, including in the coordination of quarterly executive meetings, periodic departmental town halls and functional leadership meetings, where she prepares all relevant details and expertly handles logistical arrangements. Brandee is always quick to lend a hand and can be counted on to deliver, particularly in high-impact situations. She is a Microsoft Office aficionado who stays up to date with developments and training that are relevant to her role and department so that she can provide exceptional support to her team. That support also extends to other Admins – as Administrative Assistant lead, Brandee bolsters her colleagues through interviewing, onboarding and mentorship. For those reasons and more, she is seen as a model employee whose can-do attitude never goes unnoticed.



Norma Lemon-Pearson
Harris Health System



Christina Suarez
Applied Materials

LOYALTY AWARD

FINALISTS



MADONNA CRAWFORD
OFFICE MANAGER,
ALITEK SOLUTIONS

Madonna Crawford is Office Manager at Alitek Solutions, but her colleagues say a better descriptor is “one in a million.” Not only has she become the go-to person for every employee at every level of the company, she treats everyone the same – with great respect and consideration. Because Alitek is a virtual company, Madonna’s support can span from early in the morning to late at night. But no matter the time of day, she jumps in to assist whenever issues arise. Her role has expanded to include technology support, procurement, invoicing, travel assistance and human resources, all of which she handles flawlessly. No matter who Madonna is working with and no matter the problem she is being asked to help with, she treats everyone with unwavering kindness and dignity. Alitek was founded on faith-based principals and Madonna exemplifies this core value every day in the way she interacts with the Alitek leadership team, staff, customers and vendors.



Chastity Holmes
UT MD Anderson Cancer Center



Kimberly Scott
Robert Half



Tanya Tillis
Texas Children's Hospital

STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP AWARD

FINALISTS



ARELI PASTRANA
EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT,
HP INC.

Areli Pastrana is Executive Assistant at HP Inc., where she is recognized for strategically collaborating with her executive, his chief of staff and his leadership team to manage the executive office. Most recently, Areli played an instrumental role in partnering with the chief of staff to create and execute the Readiness Plan for an entirely new organization within the company. This included recommending and executing key meetings and identifying key stakeholders across business units with a focus on operating rhythm. She ran point to ensure the organization design and selection process stayed on track, aligning complex calendars for interviews across organizations and executives. Only a few months into the new organizational design, Areli continues to proactively bring forward choice-points and make recommendations based on her purview of business needs. Her colleagues are consistently amazed by her incredible professionalism, her sense of urgency, and her ability to lean into every task with a lens for delivering the best customer experience.



Farrah Gouge
HP, Inc.



Julie Murphy
Hewlett Packard Enterprise

GREATNESS RECOGNIZED

Gwen Duffy

Ashley Swartz

Kimberly Scott

Missy Maynor

Congratulations to our amazing Robert Half team and all the Houston Admin Awards nominees!

Robert Half®

4.374.3469 | roberthalf.com | HIRE. GET HIRED. WE ARE THE BEST PLACE FOR BOTH. © 2023 Robert Half International Inc. EOE M/F/D/V RH-0223

ACHIEVER AWARD

FINALISTS

WINNER



DONNA WHITE
PROGRAM COORDINATOR,
MD ANDERSON CANCER CENTER

Donna White is Program Coordinator at MD Anderson Care Center, where she provides exemplary support to the Hematologic Malignancy section – according to one physician, Donna has “undoubtedly contributed to our success as academicians and clinical faculty.” She launches into every initiative with a can-do attitude, welcoming new processes and consistently going above and beyond what is expected

of her. Donna is known for identifying solutions to problems and completing every task with exceptional success. For example, she has the reputation within her department as a “Concur guru” – she takes the time to master processes and new programs and fully embraces every new initiative that is presented to her. Donna’s incredible administrative skills are recognized not only by faculty and leadership but also by her peers. She is constantly sought out to provide guidance to other administrators and always does so with an exceedingly cheerful disposition. Through her work, Donna is committed to promoting the well-being of her colleagues and her team members.



Judi Bourque
Collins Aerospace



Lisa Chaput
Texas Children's
Hospital



Gwen Duffy
Robert Half



Ruthie Freeman
Core Group
Resources



Marie LeBlanc
Cheniere Energy

ADMINISTRATIVE EXCELLENCE
IN PUBLIC SERVICE

FINALISTS

WINNER



ELIZABETH LONGORIA
ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT, COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT,
HARRIS COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

In her role as Administrative Assistant, Community Engagement, at the Harris County Sheriff’s Office, Elizabeth Longoria’s commitment and contributions to the organization and the larger community are on full display. Over the past year, she has successfully increased HCSO’s newly developed community outreach programs including Police Activity League (a youth crime prevention program that uses educational, athletic and recreational activities to create trust and understanding between police officers

and youth) and UNIDOS (designed to assist the Spanish-speaking residents of Harris County). She also organized HCSO’s first ever Citizens’ Police Academy class for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, helping to secure partnerships with several deaf and hard of hearing organizations, performing outreach to three deaf and hard-of-hearing-only churches, and personally learning sign language to ensure she could communicate accurately with the participants. “I believe much of my own successes in this organization,” one police officer said, “is because of Elizabeth’s continued encouragement to inspire and motivate all of us.”



Crystal Molina
Houston Police
Department



Cynthia
Scott-Maxie
MD Anderson
Cancer Center

ABOVE THE CALL AWARD

FINALISTS

WINNER



KELLY ALESSI
SENIOR STATION ADMINISTRATOR,
SOUTHWEST AIRLINES

Kelly Alessi is Senior Station Administrator for Southwest Airlines, where her talent for taking initiative is seen as second to none. She is an incredible resource to employees, helping the team with everything from complex payroll issues to overseeing hiring and onboarding processes (and everything in-between). But it is Kelly’s heart that can’t be ignored – she lives by Colleen Barrett’s philosophy of following the Golden Rule. When a tornado caused

significant damage to a neighborhood near Hobby Airport, Kelly sprang into action, calling to check on employees who lived in the area and even booking hotel rooms and adjusting work schedules for those affected. She updates vending options so employees have healthy, fresh food offerings; designs and coordinates a welcome and training process for new employees; and unfailingly provides the legendary customer service Southwest is known for. What’s most impressive is that Kelly does all of this without being asked – she’s simply dedicated to doing what’s right for Southwest and its people.



Anitra Gallien
MD Anderson
Cancer Center



Veronica Medellin
UT MD Anderson
Cancer Center



Tiffany Nguyen
Onit



Thuy Ta
SimpleLegal / Onit



CONGRATULATIONS

NORMA LEMON-TURNER

2023 Admin Awards Nominee

Thank you for exemplifying stellar leadership every day.
We are proud of you!

Harris Health System is the public healthcare safety-net provider established in 1966 to serve the residents of Harris County, Texas. As an essential healthcare system, Harris Health champions better health for the entire community, with a focus on low-income uninsured and underinsured patients, through acute and primary care, wellness, disease management and population health services. Ben Taub Hospital and Lyndon B. Johnson Hospital anchor Harris Health's robust network of 39 clinics, health centers, specialty locations and virtual technology.

HARRISHEALTH
SYSTEM
harrishealth.org



HARRIS COUNTY - HOUSTON
SPORTS AUTHORITY

EDIE JEANES, MONICA HAMILTON, VERIEL HENRY

The Harris County - Houston Sports Authority Admin team of Edie Jeanes, Executive Administrative Assistant and Office Manager; Monica Hamilton, Executive Administrative Assistant; and Veriel Henry, Front Desk Receptionist/Administrative Assistant are a dedicated group of professionals who – to put it in sports lingo – always hit it out of the park. These three incredible women are more than just colleagues: They’re teammates. When Edie experienced medical ailments that required long-term rehabilitation, she left some big shoes to fill.

But Monica rose to the occasion without hesitation, singlehandedly tackling the responsibilities of two important administrative positions – and doing so flawlessly. Though she had no sort of official training to handle Edie’s work, she quickly taught herself how to do the job. Veriel, who worked as a volunteer, came out of retirement to fill the temporary administrative assistant/front desk position. Upon Edie’s return, the three have combined their superpowers to keep the organization running at its absolute best. They’re the true definition of a dream team.



Cheniere Energy
Amanda Leger, Bridget Snyder,
Christina Willmore, Desiree Derouen,
Jamie Prejean, Jessica Badon, Kayla
Graham, Marie LeBlanc, Missy
Labauve, Stephanie Huck



IT IS OUR
SECOND-TO-NONE
TEAM
OF GLOBALLY DIVERSE
AND TALENTED WORKFORCE
THAT HAS PROPELLED US
INTO SUCCESS

www.cheniere.com



CONGRATULATIONS!



Recipient of the
FOUNDER’S AWARD
for Creating an Exceptional Work Environment
for Administrative Professionals

☒ Career Advancement

☒ Career Pathing

☒ Positive Leadership Environment

☒ Ownership & Leadership of Important Projects

☒ Recognition

☒ Executive Sponsor

☒ Internal Admin Organization

☒ Professional Development

FINALISTS

SHAY JEFFERSON
EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT,
HOUSTON METHODIST WEST HOSPITAL



Cindy Abelenda
Cheniere Energy



**Isabel 'Izzy'
De La Torre**
Texas Children's
Hospital



Veronica Edwards
Texas Children's
Hospital



Janine Gibb
Yokogawa
Corporation of
America



**Violet
Gobert-Powell**
Onit



Kristen Turpen
First Community



Kathy Watson
WTW

BEST OUTFIT PRIZE DRAWING



WINNER:
TIFFANY NGUYEN, ONIT

TEAM SPIRIT PRIZE



WINNER:
HARRIS HEALTH SYSTEM



**MarshMcLennan
Agency**

At MMA, we know more than just insurance.

We know Houston.

Marsh McLennan Agency (MMA) provides business insurance, employee health & benefits, retirement, and private client insurance solutions to organizations and individuals seeking limitless possibilities. MMA combines the personalized service model of a local consultant with the global resources of the world's leading professional services firm, Marsh McLennan.



**THANK YOU
TO OUR SPONSORS**

NATIONAL SPONSORS



PREMIER PARTNERS



SUPPORTING PARTNERS

