

SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA  
OCTOBER 26 | 2023

# ADMIN AWARDS<sup>®</sup>

THE ADMINISTRATIVE PROFESSION'S  
HIGHEST HONOR



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# A LETTER FROM THE ADMIN AWARDS



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

As I reflected on my six plus years with the Admin Awards, I felt compelled to identify the common denominator, the thread that runs

through this honorable endeavor to celebrate this 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 San Francisco Bay Area 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 has the opportunity to 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 San Francisco Bay Area 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 San Francisco Bay Area’s Administrative Professionals!

**Eric Trautmann**  
SVP of Partnerships

## 2023 JUDGES

**Annie Hersh**  
Forge Global

**Brenda Carpenter**  
Retired

**Carmen Martin**  
Serene Solutions

**June Wideman**  
Retired

**Wasim Fathima Shah**  
Wellmark- Blue Cross  
Blue Shield

**Karthik Reddy Bujuru**  
HighLife Medical

**Kathy Cannon**  
Juniper Networks

**Kimberley Ptarcinski**  
Juniper Networks

**Pam Gerber**  
The Fibroid Institute of Dallas

**Cassandra Painter**  
Lawrence Livermore  
National Laboratory

**Sherry Parsons**  
Cisco

**Susan Noakes**  
Lockheed Martin

**Helen Shoffner**  
Independence Blue Cross

**Jill Stanghellini**  
Freewire Technologies

**Debra Leonard-Porch**  
Ada S. McKinley Community  
Services, Inc.

**Kristin Brinkman**  
BVF Partners L.P.

**Deidre Dixon**  
BlueCross BlueShield  
Association

**Judy Champion**

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University of California,  
Berkeley (UCB)

# THE JEANNETTE CASTELLANO LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD



The Admin Awards was inspired by my mother, Jeannette Castellano, a career Executive Secretary whose dedication and pride in her role left an indelible mark on me. It was her influence that gave birth to the The Admin Awards: The Highest Honor in the Administrative Profession the world's first public recognition program for Administrators.

In 2021, we celebrated our 10th Anniversary by introducing The Jeannette Castellano Lifetime Achievement Award, a tribute to extraordinary individuals who have served the Administrative Profession for a minimum of 30 years, embodying excellence, leadership, and unwavering commitment. Recipients of this award make an impact not only on their leaders, organizations, and profession, but make a difference in the lives of others. In this sacred circle of legends, we've already welcomed two remarkable souls, June Wideman and Joan Burge, whose contributions have become the embodiment of this award's spirit.

Tonight we honor our third luminary in the heart of San Francisco, Margot Roache-Green, just across the bay from where she shines bright in the vibrant community of Oakland.

Margot's impact stretches far beyond the confines of her profession. Her story is not just about a successful career; it's about the power of one person's vision, dedication, and compassion in shaping a better world for others.

Margot's journey began with her unwavering determination to pursue her education, working three jobs, while also raising two children. Through sheer grit and hard work, she earned her degree, laying the foundation for a lifetime dedicated to service and empowerment through the administrative function.

In the 1960's, Margot's vision for accessible healthcare led her to establish health centers in marginalized communities, ensuring that even the most vulnerable had access to essential services.

In the 1980s, Margot championed education and professional growth for women on welfare and farm workers, empowering them to become economically self-sufficient.



Her tenure at IBM in the 1990s showcased her adaptability and foresight, embracing new technologies and championing their human-centric applications. Margot's proficiency in technology was not just about embracing change; it was about utilizing it to bridge gaps and foster connections in her community.

Margot's impact extended to her role as a Management Analyst with Alameda County Services during the passing of the Affordable Care Act, where she led the transition of Medi-Cal's applicants ensuring healthcare for the working poor. Her vision for empowering women and girls led her to serve at Soroptomist of the East Bay, where her multifaceted contributions included grant writing, fundraising, and even creating beautiful hats for fundraisers.

Margot's dedication to Oakland's underserved youth materialized in the Pathway to College and Career program, offering students access to invaluable resources and opportunities they had never dreamed of before.

Even in her current full time role at DNV, at the remarkable age of 79, Margot continues to bridge gaps and advocate for positive change, all while supporting local businesses and her community.

Margot Roache Green's story is not just one of professional excellence; it is a testament to the profound impact one person can have on an organization and the community it serves. In a world often focused on self-interest, Margot stands as a symbol of selflessness, kindness, and unwavering dedication to the well-being of others.

It is with immense admiration and pride that we present Margot Roache Green with the 2023 Jeannette Castellano Lifetime Achievement Award. May her journey inspire her fellow Administrators and us all, to use our gifts and convictions to make a difference, one bold vision at a time.

**Sunny Nunan**  
Founder and CEO of the Admin Awards

## COLLEEN BARRETT AWARD FOR ADMINISTRATIVE EXCELLENCE

# WINNER



### CHRISTINE ENCELAN DELIVERABLE MANAGER, WEST YOST ASSOCIATES

Christine Encelan is Deliverable Manager at West Yost Associates, where she uses her 35-year career as an Admin to provide excellent client service that aligns with the firm's core values. As the company has continued to expand, Christine has made it her mission to introduce new employees into West Yost's commitment to maintaining a "small-firm" culture. She teaches the importance of achieving high-quality results while also maintaining a sustainable work-life balance – and she always makes herself available to aid others in reaching that balance. By constantly communicating with new employees, Christine makes them feel needed and valued, and has helped integrate more than 50 new staff located across multiple states into the firm. What enables Christine to be so successful is that she truly cares not only about the quality of her team's work, but also the people she works with, spending time to get to know them. She is a caring and compassionate colleague in every sense of the word.

### FINALISTS



**Sabrina Marson**  
West Yost  
Associates



**Adriann Poat**  
Gilead  
Sciences, Inc.



**Yelena Tokar**  
Energy  
Recovery, Inc.

## 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.**

LOYALTY AWARD

FINALISTS

WINNER



**MID MARTINEZ**  
ADMINISTRATIVE COORDINATOR,  
GILEAD SCIENCES, INC.

Mid Martinez is Administrative Coordinator at Gilead Sciences, Inc. In her role, she consistently demonstrates exceptional teamwork while fostering collaboration and empowering others to reach their full potential. For instance, on multiple occasions this year, Mid took on additional responsibilities when Admins in other functions were out for a period of time. She balanced her routine responsibilities with these additional assignments and never missed a beat, even as she helped event planners with the National Meeting and Mid-Year Meeting planning, slide preparation, office logistics and ad hoc requests that required Admin support. Despite this not being part of her core job duties, Mid rolled up her sleeves and offered to help wherever it was needed. She has keen insights, extraordinary values and approaches work and life by always doing the right thing for the greater good. Mid’s optimism and ability to uplift others have created a work environment where everyone feels valued, supported and motivated to give their absolute best.



**Kathy Askew**  
Kaiser  
Permanente



**Sara Stoebe**  
Gilead Sciences, Inc.

STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP AWARD

FINALISTS

WINNER



**JILL BALL**  
SENIOR EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT TO THE CIO,  
OKTA

In her role as Senior Executive Assistant to the CIO at Okta, Jill Ball stands out as a strategic partner in three key areas: Her ability to represent her leader in meetings; the masterful way she prioritizes and reprioritizes her CIO’s day; and her magical ability to connect with others to make them feel special and raise team morale. Many executives think “I wish I could clone myself so I can be in two places at once” – and that’s essentially what Jill has managed to do through her expert approach to strategic partnership. Whether it’s representing her leader on a call to ensure all critical details are discussed or diplomatically adjusting meeting times with influential stakeholders, Jill independently and astutely handles all tasks. She understands the importance of every relationship her leader has and furthers them by being a joy to work with. Jill’s leader calls her an “angel” – a true blessing as both a strategic partner and a friend.



**Laura Barakett**  
The Clorox  
Company



**Emily Jasinsky**  
Jazz  
Pharmaceuticals



**Denise Roque**  
Salesforce



**Nieshia Smith**  
iHeartMedia

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the San Francisco Bay Area  
Admin Awards 2023

For more information, please visit [www.Gilead.com](http://www.Gilead.com).

GREATNESS RECOGNIZED

Congratulations to all the San Francisco Bay Area Admin Awards Nominees!

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ABOVE THE CALL AWARD

FINALISTS



**MELANIE MACANLALAY**  
COORDINATOR BASE OPERATIONS,  
SOUTHWEST AIRLINES

As Coordinator Base Operations at Southwest Airlines, Melanie Macanlalay serves nearly 1,400 flight attendants who call Oakland Inflight their Home Base. She has lived and worked the Southwest Way for 16 years, and her compassionate, kind, thoughtful, empathetic and dutiful approach to her work reflects her desire to always be the best. Affectionately known as “Mel,” she has never encountered a task too difficult or too vast for her to tackle – she taps into the vast web of relationships she has built and nurtured to meet any challenge head on. Mel believes in the Golden Rule: She puts people first and treats everyone respectfully and like family. For instance, she often drops off food at flight attendants’ homes when they are out sick and checks to make sure they are on the mend. Mel is the heart of Oakland Inflight’s Administrative team and is LUVed, admired and respected by all.



**Mary Coelho**  
Roche



**Pia Frances**  
Gilead  
Sciences, Inc.



**Kelly Ikler**  
Snowflake



**Rayna Kutsal**  
Hotel Council of  
San Francisco



**Irene Loew**  
Gilead  
Sciences, Inc.

ACHIEVER AWARD

FINALISTS



**MARITESS FERNANDEZ**  
EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT,  
PG&E

In her role as Executive Assistant at PG&E, Maritess Fernandez is known as a “knowledge bank” – an invaluable resource that her team can always rely on. This was especially evident during a first-time four-day conference that required 70-plus PG&E executives to travel to the east coast. Maritess turned what could have been a logistical nightmare into a seamless week of professional growth and memories (and one that is still being talked about today). She coordinated all flights, hotel confirmations, transportation and group dinners for the executives, working with their assistants and the conference organizers. Additionally, Maritess temporarily supported the CFO while his assistant was on maternity leave, assuming this responsibility while continuing to perform her own duties. Though on a hybrid work schedule, she came to the office in person more frequently so she could increase her interactions with the executive and provide the support needed. Maritess always goes the extra mile to ensure she delivers work that is above and beyond expectations.



**Yvette Andrada**  
Gilead  
Sciences, Inc.



**Kimberly Atkinson**  
Roche



**Dakotah Benson**  
Snowflake



**Claudia Herrmann**  
Okta



**Judith Muros**  
Roche



**Jazzmin Vicencio**  
Southwest Airlines

LEADERSHIP AWARD

FINALISTS



**ADRIANN POAT**  
SENIOR ADMINISTRATIVE COORDINATOR,  
GILEAD SCIENCES, INC.

As Senior Administrative Coordinator at Gilead Sciences, Inc., Adriann Poat is known for her exceptional dedication and profound contributions as a leader within the organization. Her role supporting the Chief Accounting Officer and Corporate Controller for a department of over 350 global employees is nothing short of remarkable. She plays a pivotal role in assisting the Board Audit Committee and ensuring compliance with SEC reporting needs. Adriann's ingenuity shines through in her design and implementation of a comprehensive board audit schedule that aligns seamlessly with stringent SEC requirements and reporting deadlines. Beyond her indispensable role in finance, Adriann has exemplified her commitment to making a positive impact both within the company and in the broader community. Her leadership in the "Quilt" project, which commemorates loved ones lost to AIDS, demonstrates her boundless compassion and dedication. It's no wonder she's so often described by her colleagues as a “natural leader” who has a unique ability to bring people together.



**Alisha Covello**  
Roche



**Christina Ramos**  
Autodesk



**Susan Ruhne**  
Salesforce

SPirit AWARD

FINALISTS

WINNER



**ALICIA PEREZ**  
MANAGER, ADMINISTRATIVE SOLUTIONS,  
NEW TEACHER CENTER

The word “spirit” is taken from the Latin word “spiritus,” meaning “breath or soul” – and as Manager, Administrative Solutions, at New Teacher Center, Alicia Perez is undoubtedly the breath and soul of the organization. For the past 19 years, Alicia has shown an unshakable “can-do” attitude even in the toughest circumstances and has remained a pillar of customer service and a builder of relationships. As one of New Teacher Center’s longest-tenured employees, Alicia has helped the organization navigate through multiple capital campaigns, the founder’s retirement, two CEO transitions and rapid growth from a small program in Santa Cruz to a national nonprofit organization. According to her colleagues, Alicia has many superpowers, including authenticity and earnestness; an ability to predict next steps and produce solutions; incredible patience; and a tendency to always go the extra mile. Her customer-centric approach means she leads with empathy and humility, putting the needs of others over her own – and serving as a prime example of how to lead with grace.



Anita Ashford  
Gilead Sciences, Inc.



Joy-Lu Broas  
Ancestry



Melissa Galindez  
Novartis



Naz Khan  
The Voleon Group



Korrina Maraschin  
Roche

ADMINISTRATIVE EXCELLENCE  
IN PUBLIC SERVICE

FINALISTS

WINNER



**LUCY PHAM SUEN**  
EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT TO THE CEO AND COO,  
HEALTHFLEX HOME HEALTH SERVICES

Lucy Pham is Executive Assistant to the CEO and COO at HealthFlex, where she demonstrates unwavering commitment, exceptional skills and invaluable contributions to the mission of providing top quality care to more than 100,000 patients throughout the Bay Area and Northern California. Lucy’s work consistently reflects a genuine passion for improving the lives of the community and contributing to the betterment of society. She frequently takes on additional responsibilities to ensure that various departments function smoothly, and she has a track record of introducing innovative solutions and practices that have significantly enhanced the efficiency and effectiveness of the services HealthFlex provides. Her ability to think outside the box and adapt to changing circumstances has resulted in substantial improvements to the company’s delivery of care. Lucy approaches problems with a solutions-oriented mindset, which results in the successful resolution of complex issues that impact day-to-day operations – all while upholding the highest ethical standards in her work and how she treats others.



Kirsten Cuaresma  
Oakland Unified  
School District



Wendy Lee-  
Cheng  
Chevron



Martel Price  
Oakland Unified  
School District

TEAM ACHIEVER AWARD

FINALISTS

WINNERS



**GILEAD SCIENCES, INC.**  
KATHY KUCHAC AND VILMA LOBATO

Vilma Lobato and Kathy Kuchac are Administrative Coordinators at Gilead Sciences, Inc., but it’s perhaps more appropriate to call them the heart and soul of the Administrative Professionals at Gilead (APAG) and Gilead Admin Volunteer Event (GAVE) team. Vilma and Kathy consistently demonstrate exceptional leadership and make meaningful contributions in their roles, which was particularly evident in their work organizing the inaugural APAG GAVE during the pandemic. The prospect of creating a virtual volunteer event seemed almost impossible, but Vilma and Kathy displayed extraordinary determination – the duo was ready and willing to roll up their sleeves to create a successful and memorable event. In fact, this small but mighty team has skillfully positioned APAG GAVE as a standout in the annual APAG week festivities. Their accomplishments have been so impressive that APAG now organizes various Gilead Admin Volunteer Events throughout the year, all inspired by the success of GAVE. Kathy and Vilma truly are examples of what excellent team players and leaders should be.



**Autodesk**  
Delfina Camezzana, Gianella Cruz,  
Mara Kijanovic, Anne Marie Loera,  
Christina Ramos, Sophia Trimboli,  
Sharon Wong

GOOD AS GOLD

BEST OUTFIT PRIZE DRAWING



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GOOD AS GOLD

TEAM SPIRIT PRIZE



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IS THE APPRECIATION OF IT.”  
– William Thackeray

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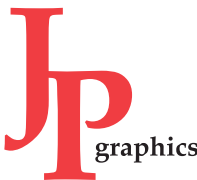
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