

**ADMIN
AWARDS**

THE ADMINISTRATIVE PROFESSION'S
HIGHEST HONOR



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COLLEEN BARRETT

SERVANT LEADER & 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:

INTERVIEW

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”



COLLEEN BARRETT AWARD FOR ADMINISTRATIVE EXCELLENCE

WINNER



KELLY SMITH

EXECUTIVE MANAGER, THE MARTIN AGENCY

Kelly Smith doesn't just keep things moving. She makes people feel steady, seen, and capable. In a year of change at The Martin Agency, she became the place others could stand: a listener first, a truth-teller when it counts, and the quiet catalyst who turns tension into momentum. As a strategic partner to leadership and a bridge for teams, Kelly anticipates what matters, communicates with precision and empathy, and brings order to a calendar that looks like chess in motion — "a duck gliding across water," as one colleague said, "calm on the surface, paddling like hell underneath." Her support feels liberating: partners and vendors say simply, "Kelly is the best." Her fingerprints are everywhere. She orchestrated a global Collective Creative Council offsite across three time zones, guided a major restructuring with care, launched cross-department trainings and new systems, and championed billable pathways that elevate the admin craft. She is a vault for sensitive matters, and a mentor who lifts others as she leads. Kelly embodies the values and spirit of The Martin Agency.

Finalists



KARYN RIVERA
Mayne Pharma



MELANIE PERTEE
Leidos



CATHIE HOKE
Capital Blue Cross



JASMYNE ACKER
Foundations for Home and Community



Small Ships, Big Adventures

Aurora Expeditions is honored to support the Admin Awards and its vital mission of publicly recognizing the invaluable contributions of Administrative Professionals!







ACHIEVER AWARD

JENNIFER VANKUIKEN

OFFICE AND BUSINESS MANAGER, LEIDOS

Jennifer VanKuiken is the steady force behind some of Leidos’ most complex and high-stakes work. As Office and Business Manager for the Leidos Innovations Center’s Advanced Warfare Technology division, Jennifer supports 450 employees across seven branches and 10 locations. From managing a \$350,000+ budget to orchestrating leadership offsites, facility consolidations, and division-wide town halls, she ensures that operations run seamlessly while keeping teams connected and mission-focused. Through mergers, leadership transitions, and even the sudden loss of a division leader, Jennifer has been the constant, bringing order, clarity, and care no matter the challenge. She’s known for her grace under pressure, her ability to anticipate needs before they surface, and her gift for making everyone feel supported. Her record of achievement over 18 years defines excellence at Leidos.



Finalists



NIDRA WILLIAMS
CannonDesign, Inc.



ELIZABETH RICUCCI
National Institutes of Health



ANNETTE MILLER
Maryland Legal Aid



JEROME ELLIS
DuPont



KAREN CARTER
FINRA



KIMI WASHINGTON
SPECIAL ASSISTANT TO CHIEF OF STAFF CALVIN YOUNG
Congratulations Kimi Washington
on being a 2025 Admin Awards
nominee, the administrative
profession’s highest honor!



Congratulations
2025 Washington D.C. and Mid-Atlantic Region Admin Awards Nominee

Nathalia Davis, ACEA, CAP-Leadership Award Nominee
Thank you for all you do to bring hope, health, and healing to those we serve.



THE ABOVE THE CALL AWARD

WINNER



KIM HYMAN

EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT TO THE CEO AND OFFICE MANAGER, FRANCONNECT

Kim Hyman is the kind of leader who makes everyone around her feel seen, supported, and at home. As Executive Assistant to the CEO and Office Manager at FranConnect, Kim has been the heartbeat of the organization, balancing executive priorities, orchestrating complex board meetings, and keeping the entire operation running with grace, humor, and a steady hand. But Kim's impact goes far beyond her title. She's the culture carrier who welcomes new hires, checks in on remote teammates, and remembers the small details that make people feel valued. From managing a full headquarters relocation to transforming office systems and planning events that bring people together, Kim has shaped both the efficiency and the spirit of FranConnect. Her influence is felt in every corner of the company.

Finalists



KRISTIE PRIMMER
Aerospace Industries Association



ABBY PINSON
Cystic Fibrosis Foundation



CINDY LOPEZ
MGM National Harbor



MICHELLE HUDSON
Northrop Grumman



ARIANA HINKLE
Leidos



MICHAELLE ANTHONY
American Foreign Service Protective Association



JORDAN GILLIES
FINRA

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Introducing the Admin Awards Preferred Partner Program

Every Administrative Professional has their own little black book of favorite vendors — a go-to list of trusted business resources that deliver when it matters most.

The Admin Awards Preferred Partner Program is that black book, made bigger. It's a curated collection of best-in-class business resources - recommended by the Admin community, for the Admin community.

When the demands of the day hit, these are the partners you can count on.

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to explore our growing list of Admin-approved resources — and tell us who yours are.

adminawards.com/preferred-partners

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- ◆ Distillery Media - Video Production
- ◆ Onyx Worldwide - Promotional Products
- ◆ San Francisco Private Dining Venues - Private Dining Options when doing business in SF

And, many more...





ADMINISTRATIVE EXCELLENCE IN PUBLIC SERVICE AWARD

WINNER



URSULA FERGUSON

EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT, DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

When you think of the heart of DC Public Schools, one name rises to the top: Ursula Ferguson. For over two decades in DC Government, and many years as Executive Assistant to the Chancellor, Ursula has been the steady hand and trusted presence behind the scenes. Serving various Chancellors as their primary administrative assistant, she has provided continuity, wisdom, and grace through times of transition, always keeping the focus on students and the mission of the district. Her contributions go far beyond the desk. Ursula has led initiatives that strengthen both culture and community, from organizing fundraisers and staff appreciation events to volunteering at graduations, testing sites, and community programs. She is known for remembering the little things, anticipating the big ones, and bringing joy, kindness, and professionalism to every corner of DCPS. Ursula isn't just the Chancellor's right hand; she's truly the heart of the team.

Finalists



VICKI WATKINS
AARP Services



CYNTHIA BUTLER
Hanover Fire-EMS



TRIAS MAYAWATI
Rare



ALYSA KELLY
NC Department of Information Technology



LATANYA TORRENCE
Prince George's County Public Schools

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LOCATION BRANDS

FranConnect's AI-powered
platform helps brands
drive location expansion,
operational efficiency and
unit-level performance
across the system



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Congratulations to our own

Samantha Mariner

winner of The Strategic Partner Award.

*Thank you for everything you do and the incredible impact
you make at Jensen Hughes every day!*

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Congratulations to FINRA's 2025 Admin Awards Nominees

WE APPRECIATE YOU! You make it happen for all your colleagues and outside business partners with your devotion, work ethic and dedication to the FINRA corporate values.


Christine Hess
Leadership Award

Karen Carter
Achiever Award

Jordan Gillies
Above The Call Award

Lisa Nicholson
Spirit Award

Kristy Dean
Colleen Barrett Award
for Administration Excellence





LEADERSHIP AWARD

WINNER



SYREETA TAYLOR

EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT TO THE DEAN, UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA-CHARLOTTE

Few roles demand both precision and people-first leadership like that of Executive Assistant, and at UNC Charlotte, Syreeta Taylor exemplifies both. As Executive Assistant to the Dean of the College of Humanities & Earth and Social Sciences, Syreeta supports hundreds of faculty, staff, and students while managing critical processes such as faculty promotions, reappointments, and college-wide events. A proud Marine Corps veteran, she brings discipline, resilience, and excellence to every challenge, earning trust as the steady hand who keeps the college moving forward. But Syreeta’s leadership shines far beyond her daily responsibilities. She helped establish a staff recognition program, launched a Staff Council to ensure every voice is heard, actively pushes for professional development opportunities for staff who are often excluded, advocates for better pay and recognition of administrative professionals under NC State personnel policies, and serves as a Green Dot trainer and mentor through the Military Affiliation Committee. She is recognized as both the advocate and the heart of the Dean’s Office.

Finalists



NAKIA WHITTAKER
Amentum



KENYA JOHNSON
PhRMA



CHRISTINE HESS
FINRA



NATHALIA DAVIS
Duke University Health System



JOANNE ACEVEDO
Johnson, Mirmiran & Thompson

A commitment to excellence.

Congratulations to our Admin Awards nominees! Your hard work and dedication to our customers and your colleagues do not go unnoticed.

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Tori Aldrin
Spirit Award



Kristi Blincoe
Loyalty Award

THE POWER BEHIND THE PROGRESS

2025 ADMIN AWARD NOMINEES

- Ariana Hinkle
The Above the Call Award
- Emily Nelson
The Above the Call Award
- Victoria Hern
The Above the Call Award
- Jennifer VanKuiken
The Achiever Award

- Melanie Pertee
The Achiever Award
- Anna Sargent
The Colleen Barrett Award for Administrative Excellence
- Kim Mudd
The Loyalty Award
- Nancy Saulsbury
The Loyalty Award

- Ashley Graham
The Spirit Award
- Ashlley Aviles
The Spirit Award
- Amanda Rocheleau
TEAM Achiever Award
- Bertha Gaeta
TEAM Achiever Award

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LOYALTY AWARD

WINNER



MICHELE DOYLE

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT, NORTHROP GRUMMAN

For more than four decades, Michele Doyle has been the heart of Northrop Grumman’s Mission Systems Sector, a living example of what true loyalty looks like. Since joining the company in 1982, Michele has supported executives, engineers, and program teams with unmatched dedication, contributing to over \$2 billion in proposal efforts, mentoring the next generation of admins, and providing the critical support that ensures success. Known as a “PowerPoint super user” and graphics expert, she has the rare ability to transform complex ideas into compelling stories, all while keeping daily operations running seamlessly. Her colleagues say Michele is the one you call when you need something done right, every time. But it’s her care for people that defines her most. Michele leads with warmth, calm, and a team-first spirit that makes everyone feel supported and valued. Her career is a testament to loyalty and lasting impact at Northrop Grumman.

Finalists



LAURA ROCHETTE
Trellix



KIMBERLY MUDD
Leidos



KRISTI BLINCOE
First Citizens Bank



KENESHA DESHIELDS
University of Maryland
Eastern Shore

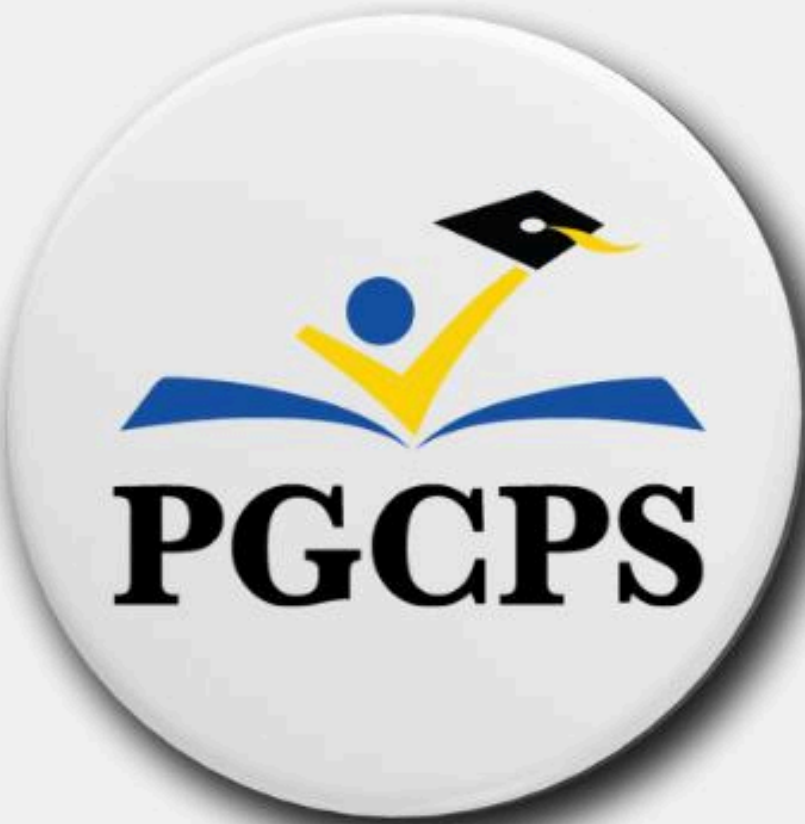


ROSE GRAY
James Madison University



ANGELA BLANCHARD
DC Public Schools

★ THE HEARTBEAT OF PGCPS ★
Fueled by Administrative Excellence.



You are more than the backbone of our schools — you are the heartbeat.
Every phone call answered.
Every deadline met.
Every challenge solved before it even reaches a desk.
“Our administrative professionals are the quiet force behind every success story.”

You are the steady hands in the storm.
The planners who see around corners.
The leaders who make others shine.
“Because of you, every student, teacher, and leader has the support they need to thrive.”

Today, we don't just thank you — we celebrate you.
We see your hard work.
We feel your dedication.
And we are inspired by your passion every single day.

Prince George’s County Public Schools
Honoring the brilliance, strength, and heart of our administrative all-stars.



THE SPIRIT AWARD







TINA FERGUSON

SR. OPERATIONS PROJECT MANAGER | SR. EXECUTIVE ADMINISTRATOR CORPORATE, MANTECH

Some people keep teams connected, but Tina Ferguson makes them come alive. For 14 years at ManTech, Tina has been known as the company’s “culture machine,” bringing contagious energy, joy, and creativity wherever she goes. From transforming windowless offices with legendary holiday contests to launching a Lip Sync Battle that drew in even the quietest colleagues, Tina has a gift for turning workplaces into communities. Her spirit was so impactful that leaders began sending her to offices across the country, knowing she could lift morale, spark connection, and make employees feel valued. Even at the executive level, Tina changes the atmosphere. She turned the corporate suite into a place filled with laughter, warmth, and imaginative celebrations, creating traditions embraced across the company. Whether she’s showing up in costume on Halloween, mentoring colleagues, or simply brightening someone’s day, Tina’s presence is unforgettable. Her creativity and joy are now part of ManTech’s culture.



Finalists

 <div>CAROL WALSH KCI Technologies</div>	 <div>GLORIA VESELICK TransUnion</div>	 <div>PENNY SMITH PNC</div>
 <div>LISA NICHOLSON FINRA</div>	 <div>THIA FOX The Council For Professional Recognition</div>	 <div>TORI ALDRIN First Citizens Bank</div>



★ Spirit Award Winner ★

Tina Ferguson

Thank you for making MANTECH the Best Place to Work!



CONGRATULATIONS, CINDY!

“Cindy is the heart of our admin team, keeping leaders connected, schedules on track and everything running smoothly. She helps us all to foster a culture where every voice matters.”

-MELONIE JOHNSON, PRESIDENT & COO



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ELEGANCE
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EVENTS.

CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL THE NOMINEES, FINALISTS, AND WINNERS.

It was our pleasure to host this unforgettable evening, a celebration of dedication, talent, and achievement. From the inspiring recognition to the moments of connection shared throughout the night, the evening reflected the importance of marking milestones in a truly distinguished setting. At Waldorf Astoria Washington DC, life's defining moments find their most elegant stage.



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TransUnion proudly supports the
**2025 ADMIN
AWARDS**

At TransUnion, we know that behind every well-run organization is an exceptional administrative professional. Your excellence, adaptability, and leadership keep everything moving forward—and we're proud to celebrate your impact.



Congratulations to
GLORIA VESELICK,
a **Spirit Award finalist** in this year's program, and to all the outstanding nominees.



THE STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP AWARD

WINNER



SAMANTHA MARINER

EXECUTIVE ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT, JENSEN HUGHES

Every executive needs a partner who sees around corners, and at Jensen Hughes, that's Sam Mariner. Since 2017, Sam has supported the CEO and most of the Executive Leadership Team, keeping six leaders aligned across continents and time zones with calm, precision, and care. Her impact shows up where it matters most. Sam led the company's first Global Growth Summit, a three-day gathering of 150+ leaders, owning everything from venue to international travel to speaker logistics. She also steered an executive office relocation, manages company-wide NFPA LiNK licensing, sustains the internal technical talks program, and even helped shape the new corporate headquarters with her thoughtful eye for design. Colleagues call her unflappable, proactive, and indispensable, the steady partner who anticipates needs, frees executive bandwidth, and keeps the business moving forward. She represents strategic partnership at its finest within Jensen Hughes.

Finalists



KIMI WASHINGTON
City Of Baltimore



JASMINE STOKLEY
City of Portsmouth



MARLA ROSARIO
Sunrise Senior Living



STEPHANIE RICHARDSON
Capital Blue Cross



MARY CARROLL-RIEDEL
LifeNet Health



THE TEAM ACHIEVER AWARD

ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT TEAM

CAPITAL BLUE CROSS

They didn't just revive a workgroup. They built an engine for administrative excellence.

At Capital Blue Cross, the CAST Steering Committee turned a pandemic-paused EA group into an inclusive, company-wide network where every administrative professional can learn, mentor, and lead. Launched on Administrative Professionals Day 2023, CAST now hosts monthly hybrid sessions (90%+ attendance) that level up skills in Outlook, Teams, OneNote, AI & Copilot, brand standards, and more, while partnering with leaders for department briefings and tapping the Beacon Institute to grow strategic impact.

Their impact is tangible and enterprise-wide: dedicated Teams channels for real-time collaboration, a OneNote resource library and company directory, and cross-functional consulting on tool rollouts. CAST also reimagined mail operations, scanning 15,000+ sensitive items during COVID, then driving a reduction of mail drop codes from 108 to 47 and designing a single Mail Access Center to boost efficiency for everyone.

The committee continues to strengthen collaboration and impact across Capital Blue Cross.



Team Names

- BETH ADAMS
- LORYN CARNEY
- CATHIE HOKE
- BETH MCINTOSH
- MELISSA NOTTO
- STEPHANIE RICHARDSON

Finalists



HUNT VALLEY OFFICE
ADMINISTRATIVE
PROFESSIONALS, JMT

Chelsea DeRose, Natalie Jones, Jennifer Myers



ADMINISTRATIVE TEAM, LEIDOS

Bertha Gaeta, Amanda Rocheleau



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Congratulations to this year's nominees!

Congrats to our very own Laura Rochette on her nomination

 | 

Trellix - The Platform CISO's Trust

Team Spirit Winner - First Citizens Bank



Good As Gold Outfit Winner



KENYA JOHNSON
PhRMA

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The Right Executive Assistant
Changes Everything

GRAND PRIZE WINNER

DEXTER ALLEN
- NATIONAL ALLIANCE FOR CAREGIVING

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