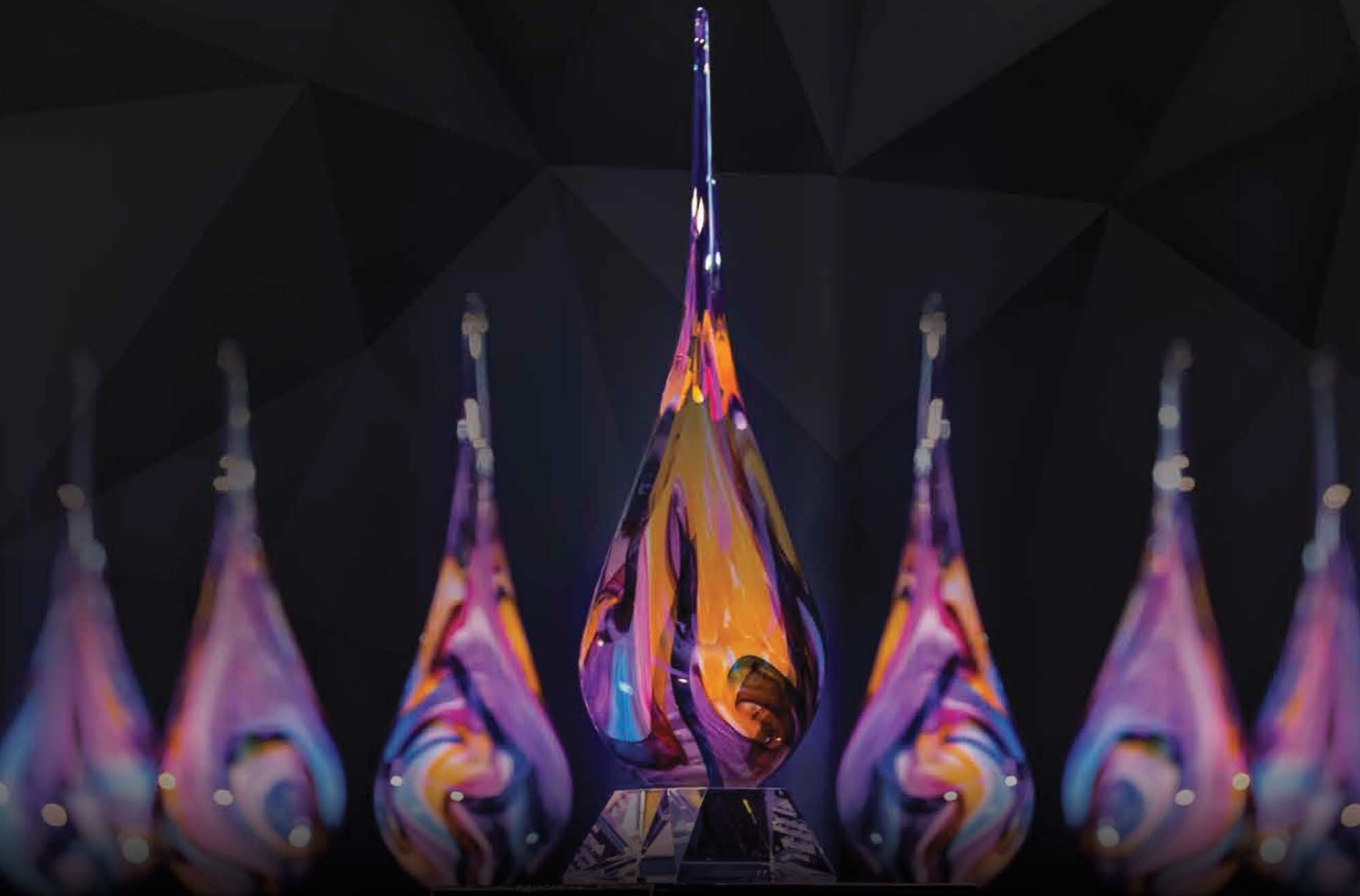


BOSTON AND  
NEW ENGLAND  
NOVEMBER 1 | 2024

# ADMIN AWARDS<sup>®</sup>

THE ADMINISTRATIVE PROFESSION'S  
HIGHEST HONOR



NATIONAL PARTNERS



# A LETTER FROM THE ADMIN AWARDS



On May 8th, the Admin Awards lost our hero.

Colleen Barrett, the Executive Assistant who rose to President & COO of Southwest Airlines during her five-decade career at Southwest, and the namesake of the Admin Awards' most prestigious award, was laid to rest at the age of 79.

Thirteen years ago, I approached Colleen with the belief that public recognition of Administrative Professionals was long overdue and that I was creating the Admin Awards to ensure its time had come. As the daughter of a retired Executive Secretary, I knew firsthand how beloved and valued Admin Professionals were. I pitched the idea for the Admin Awards to Colleen, taking weeks to craft what I hoped was the perfect email, asking if we could name our program's most prestigious award after her. Her response came within an hour: "Yes! Count me in! And I love that you're also recognizing receptionists as well - because they too are so important!" She thought the Admin Awards was an excellent idea and couldn't believe that it hadn't been done anywhere in the world before. We indeed would be the first public recognition program for Administrative Professionals, ever. I was thrilled and terrified in equal measures. Colleen Barrett's name was now attached to our endeavor. We could not screw this up.

In 2012, we held the first Admin Awards in Dallas, Texas. I remember when I went to reserve the ballroom, thinking 'if nobody shows up, we'll just spread the tables out enough to make the room look less empty'. I was a single mother at the time, with no nest egg and no plan B. I could not afford to lose. And I would not disappoint Colleen Barrett.

But on that cold November day back in 2012, we welcomed hundreds of area Administrative Professionals and Executives, filling the ballroom to capacity within a week. Originally, I had no vision of becoming a national recognition program, much less the Administrative Profession's highest honor. But that afternoon, as we left a ballroom packed with Admins and Executives cheering one another on, I realized what we created was truly special. And we made grown men cry. That is when I really knew we were onto something. What I knew from watching my mother's dedicated service to the profession was that there never was a shortage of appreciation of Administrative Professionals. What was lacking, however, was a meaningful way to show it.

Over the next 12 years, as we expanded the Admin Awards from coast to coast, Colleen meticulously deliberated over every decision regarding the Winners and Finalists of the award that bears her name. She would scribble notes in the margins of printed nominations, indicating what resonated, what didn't, and her rationale for each decision. Colleen was clear and uncompromising about the behaviors, skills, and ideals that nominees in her award category needed to embody—attributes she believed were essential to her impact at

Southwest. She also warned me that there could be a time when she may declare no winners and to be prepared because one day she may have more than one. Colleen's compass was true north and she made sure she followed it.

Colleen also became my friend. I'll never forget the day, early in our relationship, when I received an invitation to a dinner party at her home. I looked at my husband wide-eyed after opening the email invite, panicking. 'This has got to be a mistake'. But when we arrived and met the diverse group of down-to-earth guests with nothing to prove, but all equally tickled to be there, I understood. Colleen was for everyday people doing extraordinary things. We everyday people were also told on the invitation that we needed to be out of the house by 8:30.

I will forever be grateful to Colleen for her example of Golden Rule leadership and for the time she spent with me which at times felt like a mini MBA on how to be a human being in business.

I'm also thankful to her for showing Administrative Professionals everywhere what's possible. And to know their potential and ability to impact. But I'm most thankful for her friendship and for the honor and privilege of continuing her legacy through the Admin Awards.

My hope for Administrative Professionals everywhere is that they are guided by Colleen's incredible example of servant leadership. I believe that was truly what transcended her roles and defined her legacy.

My hope for executives is that you are inspired to regard your Administrative Professionals the way Herb Kelleher regarded Colleen Barrett.

Herb was Colleen's biggest fan, championing her every step of the way, from Executive Assistant to President & COO at Southwest. As far back as the 70s, long before it was a thing to consider your Admin your strategic partner, Herb not only gave Colleen a seat at the table, he gave her a voice. He created an environment where she felt safe to spread her wings and try new things. But I think the greatest gift he gave her was his confidence in her ability to go beyond where she thought she could. As Colleen shared with me shortly before her passing, "If Herb told me I could do something, I just believed it."

He gave her a chance.

Just like the chance Colleen gave me 13 years ago. I'm not sure where we'd be today without it.

Rest in Peace, Colleen. You will forever be our Queen of Hearts. ❤️

**Sunny Nunan**  
Founder & CEO  
Admin Awards



**Colleen Barrett**  
September 14, 1944 - May 8, 2024  
Queen of our Hearts



# CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR 2024 WINNERS!



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JEANNETTE CASTELLANO  
*Lifetime Achievement*  
AWARD  
RECIPIENT

SUSAN  
WALSH



In 2001, Converse was in crisis. An investment group had taken over, leaving the brand's future in doubt. Only 76 employees were asked to stay, and among them was Executive Assistant Susan Walsh, a steady force at Converse for 37 years.

Through four CEOs, economic ups and downs, relocations, and acquisitions, Susan has been the constant—a sure-footed foundation during every twist and turn. When Converse faced an impossible 120-day relocation of its HQ and distribution center, Susan stepped up with her signature resolve: "Let's go!" Her leadership and determination inspired the team, helping carry the company through those turbulent days. Thanks to her unwavering commitment, Converse not only survived but thrived, culminating in its acquisition by Nike three years later.

She's "the mirror for those that need to hear how they're doing because she's giving it to you straight" and the "crown-straightener, before that was even a phrase" kind of colleague. She's the confidant, coach, and friend you want in your corner, even stepping in as a "bouncer" during a tense moment between Converse and Nike execs. Known for boldness and candor, she's the one who starts tough conversations with, "I probably shouldn't say this but..." and delivers exactly what's needed.

As Converse's CEO recently said, "Susan Walsh holds Converse together as more than just a business. She makes it a place where we can all feel at home." For nearly four decades, Susan has exemplified courage, candor, and heart to make a place better for everyone around her, year after year, through good times and bad.

**Congratulations, Susan Walsh, on being New England's first Jeannette Castellano Lifetime Achievement Award recipient at the Admin Awards.**



## COLLEEN BARRETT AWARD FOR ADMINISTRATIVE EXCELLENCE

# WINNER



### JUDIT BRUGGER EXECUTIVE ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT, TAKEDA PHARMACEUTICALS

Judit Brugger is an Executive Administrative Assistant at Takeda Pharmaceuticals. She has been an Admin for 39 years. "At Takeda, 'Judit' isn't just a name; it is a solution." Colleagues often say, "If there's a problem, just ask Judit," because her proactive problem-solving and deep knowledge have become indispensable to the entire team. With an impressive 39-year career in administration, Judit Brugger's dedication, skill, and resourcefulness are unmatched. As an Executive Administrative Assistant supporting seven Executives and 65 direct reports, Judit is known for her remarkable attention to detail and ability to anticipate needs before they even arise. She embodies calm under pressure, handling complex schedules, high-stakes meetings, and every logistical detail seamlessly. One colleague shares, "Judit anticipates ten steps ahead." Beyond her administrative expertise, Judit's compassion and commitment to helping others are always evident. For Judit, tackling challenges with precision and care comes as second nature—whether it's assembling a wheelchair or managing complex schedules for senior leaders. Every interaction with Judit leaves her colleagues inspired, supported, and confident.

#### FINALISTS



Holly Evers  
Aveo Oncology



Kayla Guadagni  
Zappi



Kevin Sroufe  
Spaulding Rehab  
Network

## 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



**TATIANA DURAKOVIC**  
EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT,  
VERTEX PHARMACEUTICALS

Tatiana Durakovic is an Executive Assistant at Vertex Pharmaceuticals, where she has worked her entire 20-year career. Tatiana's diligence, diplomacy, and attention to detail have been crucial to the company's growth and the organization's continuity. She has provided stability during challenging periods and leadership during successful times – always staying loyal to Vertex and her team. Tatiana consistently goes above and beyond what is required by anticipating problems and proposing or executing solutions to those problems. She will work after hours and weekends when needed and is always on top of every detail. Tatiana connects deeply with the company's mission to transform the lives of people living with serious diseases – this is not "just a job" for her. Tatiana is completely dedicated to ensuring Vertex is set up for success, and she has complete trust from leadership.



**Elizabeth Foster**  
Point32Health



**Judith Russell**  
Iron Mountain



**Evelin Shepherd**  
Tufts Medical Center

ABOVE THE CALL AWARD

FINALISTS

WINNER



**JESSICA BRADBURY**  
EXECUTIVE COORDINATOR, USBU DD&T,  
TAKEDA PHARMACEUTICALS

Jessica Bradbury is an Executive Coordinator at Takeda Pharmaceuticals and has been an Admin for 10 years. She has supported various departments, including Field Sales, Global Regulatory Affairs, Global Clinical & Translational Science, and most recently, Digital, Data & Technology. Jessica is known for her proactive approach, exceptional problem-solving skills, and unwavering support for colleagues. She has become a trainer, educating fellow Admins on emerging technologies and Artificial Intelligence. She's always looking for ways to contribute back to the admin community, most often through her work as Co-Chair on the Admin Professional Development Committee and its supervisory Admin Steering Committee. Jessica's contributions extend beyond her administrative duties, as she serves as a mentor and leader, inspiring those around her with her enthusiasm and care. Her relentless pursuit of excellence makes her an invaluable asset to Takeda Pharmaceuticals.



**Cindy Goodman**  
Amylyx  
Pharmaceuticals Inc



**Monica Melo**  
University of  
Massachusetts  
Lowell



**Melody Murphy**  
Repare  
Therapeutics



**Elisha Peixoto**  
Iron Mountain



**Shannon Vanasse**  
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LET YOUR LIGHT SHINE



**Christina Flessas**

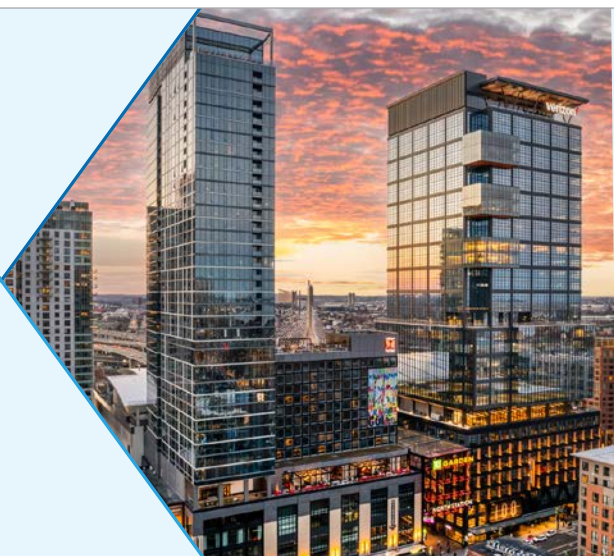


**Stephanie Roy**



**Kimberly Bennett**

Congratulations to our amazing Robert Half team and all the Boston and New England Region Admin Awards nominees!



BXP is proud to sponsor the  
**2024 Greater Boston Admin Awards**

Congratulations to all of the  
**2024 ADMIN AWARD NOMINEES!**

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## ACHIEVER AWARD

## FINALISTS

### WINNER



### ANGELA MIEHER EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT, AMAZON WEB SERVICES

Angela Mieher is an Executive Assistant at Amazon Web Services and has been an Admin for 10 years. She supports the Media, Entertainment, Games, and Sports Global Solutions Architecture Leader and the Global Sales Leader. "Angela's ability to manage the day-to-day role and the needs of the 1100+ employee global team has raised the bar on how we operate and won us new relationships, influence, and

confidence across our organization. Angela has demonstrated exceptional commitment to our strategy and to her career growth through her input to annual planning, leading as a core member of the Global Rhythm of the Business virtual team, and her ability to adapt and achieve in the face of organizational change. She has simplified the day-to-day noise that can bog down our Executives, and her relentless work ethic and attention to detail have been instrumental in keeping the leadership team efficient and productive."



**Briana Jefferson**  
Novartis



**Laura Jolin**  
Analog Devices



**Amy Normand**  
Analog Devices

## LEADERSHIP AWARD

## FINALISTS

### WINNER



### KEVIN SROUFE EXECUTIVE ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT, SPAULDING REHAB NETWORK

Kevin Sroufe is an Executive Administrative Assistant at the Spaulding Rehabilitation Network, supporting the CNO and COO. He has been an Admin for 9 years. Transitioning into a new role, Kevin has exemplified true leadership by generously investing his time and energy to help colleagues overcome challenges and develop necessary skills. He consistently serves as a role model, mentor, coach, and teacher, setting

high standards and inspiring those around him. His commitment to sharing knowledge and best practices has significantly contributed to the professional development of his colleagues. Kevin's influence has been profoundly positive for the Spaulding Rehabilitation Network, and his leadership, mentorship, and communication skills continue to make him an invaluable member of the organization.



**Karen Ciampa**  
Takeda  
Pharmaceuticals



**Jean Cocco**  
Novo Nordisk



**Kelly Johnson**  
Takeda  
Pharmaceuticals

Congratulations to Nicole Gallagher,  
nominee for the  
"Strategic Partnership" Award!

Nimbus thanks and congratulates all of our  
amazing administrative team.

**nimbus**  
THERAPEUTICS

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Nicole Gallagher



Erin Maher



Alanna Driscoll



Mary Ann Reyes



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Brighter Future**

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Congratulations to all of our 2024  
Admin Awards nominees

Allison Whitney

Rachael Mumgaard

Sandra Creamer

Kelly Johnson

Melissa Downie

Jessica Bradbury

Karen Ciampa

Laurie Bean

Aya Roberts

Judit Brugger

Yuko Barnaby



## STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP AWARD

## FINALISTS

### WINNER



### LAUREN KIMBALL

ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR, EXECUTIVE ADMINISTRATION,  
MERSANA THERAPEUTICS, INC.

Lauren Kimball is the Associate Director of Executive Administration at Mersana Therapeutics, Inc. She has been an Admin for 13 years. For many years, Lauren (an Admin team of 1) has served as a Strategic Partner for up to 8 C-suite Executives at once. She also conceptualized and executed a robust enterprise-wide cultural and social strategy. As a key driver of employee engagement and a cultural hub for the company, Lauren recognized the need

for change management and partnered with Mersana's Human Resource team to develop and roll out company-wide workshops to manage the impacts of significant company workforce changes and new leadership. Lauren also personally led the onboarding of the new CEO. She continuously performs difficult tasks and solves challenging problems day after day, as a result of her resourcefulness and relentless perseverance. Her strategic value to the organization can't be understated.



**Nicole Gallagher**  
Nimbus  
Therapeutics



**Aya Roberts**  
Takeda  
Pharmaceuticals



**Stephanie Roy**  
Robert Half



**Wendy Serville**  
The Hartford

## ADMINISTRATIVE EXCELLENCE IN PUBLIC SERVICE

## FINALISTS

### WINNER



### NICHOLAS SOUSA

EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT,  
ASCENTRIA CARE ALLIANCE

Nicholas Sousa is an Executive Assistant at Ascentria Care Alliance and has been an Admin for 13 years. Nick has demonstrated exceptional dedication and skill throughout his career. Starting as a program director for the Boy Scouts of America, Nick's journey led him to the Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth, and Families, where he rose to the position of Confidential Secretary to the Chief of Staff. In

2021, he joined Ascentria Care Alliance as the Executive Assistant for Community Services and Finance, quickly taking on additional roles to support the organization. Nick's contributions of mentoring colleagues, co-chairing the Administrative Council, driving strategic priorities, and stepping up in critical situations have been invaluable to the success of Ascentria Care Alliance and the services it provides.



**Kimberly Bennett**  
Robert Half



**Sara McDonald**  
Stryker



**Brenda Toomey**  
Spencer  
Technologies

## SPIRIT AWARD

## FINALISTS

### WINNER



### EMILY MESERVE

SENIOR EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT,  
ATHENAHEALTH

Emily Meserve serves as a Senior Executive Assistant at athenahealth, where she serves one Vice President and six Executive Directors. She has been an Admin for 16 years. Emily comes to work every day with a positive can-do attitude. She not only makes her stakeholders shine and thrive, but she finds ways to elevate the organization. She regularly volunteers with athenahealth's nonprofit giving initiatives, whether it's

working with the local Boston Food Bank for a food donation drive, helping setup and organize the annual family-focused Halloween event "athenaWeen," or even helping to proactively organize and optimize EA team members during extended family leaves or sabbaticals. Emily is also responsible for tracking the internal recognition program, continuing to drive a positive culture at athenahealth. And a final quote from one of the nominations for Emily "Bumping into Emily is always like a warm, fuzzy glow of positivity."



**Gabriella Campo**  
Sanofi



**Lillian Cunha**  
Vertex  
Pharmaceuticals



**Melissa Davis**  
Iron Mountain



**Rosemary Grassi-Jones**  
IntelyCare



**Michelle Lento**  
Repare  
Therapeutics



**Cynthia Quinn**  
Analog Devices



## Congratulations

to all our outstanding nominees  
and thank you for your invaluable  
contributions to Iron Mountain.



**Elisha Peixoto**  
Finalist  
Above the Call Award



**Judith Russell**  
Finalist  
Loyalty Award



**Melissa Davis**  
Finalist  
Spirit Award



**Theresa Holland**  
Nominee  
Spirit Award





# *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!



## Congratulations to our 2024 Nominees

Debbie Bernard ◆ Laura Jolin ◆ Roberto Larios  
Richard Lay ◆ Amy Normand ◆ Cynthia Quinn



**“NEXT TO EXCELLENCE  
IS THE APPRECIATION OF IT.”**  
— William Thackeray

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