

Twenty-Sixth Annual

Virginia Hart Special Recognition Award



May 21, 2009

1:00 p.m.

Senate Parlor
State Capitol
Madison, Wisconsin

About Virginia Hart (1914–2007)

Virginia Hart, Wisconsin's first woman cabinet member, served as Secretary of the Department of Regulation and Licensing, chairperson of the Department of Industry, Labor and Human Relations, and as chairperson of the Labor and Industry Review Commission.

Upon Virginia Hart's retirement from state service in 1983, friends and colleagues established a fund so that each year a woman in Wisconsin state service could be recognized for exemplary performance and contribution to the citizens of the state. On March 24, 2007, Virginia Hart passed away at the age of 92.

With the generous help of contributors the fund has been able to sustain the program for 25 years. With continued support we hope to continue for many years to come. Contributors from 2007 to the present include Jo Ann Lampman, Helen Bruner, Tad Pinkerton, David and Ellen O'Brien Saunders, Philip Jones, Harold Jordahl Jr., Ed & Winnie Durkin, William Kraus, Anthony S. Earl, Neill DeClercq, David Nack, C.H. Blanchard, June Weisberger Blanchard, Mr. & Mrs. Stephen Cohen, Mary Jo Howard Croake, Ariel Y. Ford, James L. Pflasterer, and Mr. & Mrs. Wayne Miller, Jesse & Nancy Hart Hernandez, Mary Louise Munts, former Governor Patrick J. Lucey, Wisconsin Women in Government.

The recognition award is administered by the Office of State Employment Relations.

About the Award

The award's emphasis is on recognizing "unsung heroines" in state service, thus providing encouragement and recognition to all women in state government. The award seeks to recognize women who share the following qualities: esteem from peers; acceptance of responsibility beyond the limits of the nominee's job description; sustained, extraordinary achievement of assigned tasks; performance recognition from clients; community service; self-improvement; and overcoming obstacles to performance.

Program

Welcome

Jennifer Donnelly, Director
Office of State Employment Relations

Remarks

Barbara Lawton, Lieutenant Governor
State of Wisconsin

Presentation of Honorable Mention Awards

Presentation of Virginia Hart Special Recognition Award

Concluding Remarks

Jennifer Donnelly

~Please join us for refreshments after the program has concluded.~



Nominees for 2009

Margaret Carlson

Michele Carter

Tina N. Cruse

Cathy Jess

Katherine Kalscheur

Mary Kay Kollat

Debbie Kraemer

Trudi Laganowski

Rose Larson

Marilyn Laskowski

Kristin McHugh

Patricia Nelson

Nancy J. Olig

Barbara Paterick

J. Jean Rogers

Kari Sanding

Suann Sheldon

Diane Siegler

Judy Smith

Sandy Stankevich

Jeanne Strublic

Lynnnette Traas

Ann Trachtenberg

Dawn M. Vick

Patty Zallar

2009 Virginia Hart
Special Recognition Award Recipient

Diane Siegler
Department of Transportation

Diane serves as a Human Resources Generalist with the Wisconsin Department of Transportation. In her role at DOT she assists divisions with activities including recruitment and staffing, classification, compensation administration, workforce planning, performance evaluations, and organizational development.

Her primary responsibility is to provide professional Human Resource (HR) services and guidance to the Division of Motor Vehicles. In the past year, Diane has restructured the hiring process for the 600 positions in DMV that serve customers at the DMV Service Centers throughout the state as well as the central office in Madison. The changes she implemented to the hiring process streamlined the recruitment from taking over 12 weeks to about 4 weeks. An on-site examination with immediate scoring and interviews added to the efficiency and effectiveness of hiring these critical customer service representative positions.

As part of the workforce planning efforts for DMV, Diane met with management and proposed modifications to the existing examination process for the customer representative positions. In an effort to increase efficiency for DMV hiring practices, she proposed an examination that combined both field and central office examinations, administered the exam in several locations around the state, scored the exams immediately for candidates, and provided first round interviews for those candidates who passed. This expedited the process for the candidates and for DMV. The examination and interview process recently concluded and it was a huge success. There were nearly 900 candidates who participated in the exam with most of them participating in the interview process.

Diane also serves as a mentor and trainer for other state agencies. She serves as an active member of the WISCJOBS user group which tests and implements changes to the statewide system used for all recruitments for state jobs. In her previous role at the State Office of Employment Relations (OSER), Diane was an HR Program Officer and was a key developer on the system. She continues to share in the ownership of the system's successes as well as the failures. She is one of the first ones to find errors and recommend solutions on a statewide basis. She is widely recognized by her peers as an expert on the Wisc.Jobs system.

Diane's understanding of HR concepts and ability to present them in an understandable way to non-HR staff is an asset few others have. Her talents help make the job of being a supervisor or manager in state service easier. She truly is trusted for expertise and her impact is felt throughout the DOT and other state agencies.

Outside of the workplace, Diane spends countless hours volunteering for the Wisconsin Special Olympics. She spends several weekends each month coordinating events and volunteering in every capacity imaginable. Diane has been involved with this organization for several years and it seems each year her involvement grows. She recently raised hundreds of dollars for Special Olympics by participating in the Polar Plunge – jumping into a frozen Lake Monona on a cold, snowy February day. She continually uses her own leave time to participate in events for these special Wisconsin children.

In the summer of 2008 she helped coordinate the Southern Wisconsin Area Track and Field Meet for the Special Olympics. In the fall of 2008, she worked at the area's bowling competition, the regional competition and then traveled to Milwaukee for the state competition. Each time she does these events she uses her own time, own financial resources, and talks about it with a passion and love for the participants that warms the hearts of those around her.

In the winter of 2008, she traveled to Stevens Point for the state winter games to help coordinate events, check in athletes and assist them to their competition sites, run timers, hand out awards, etc. She rounded out the winter season by taking a week of personal vacation to travel to Idaho and volunteer at the Special Olympic International Games.

Diane is a friend to the athletes, coaches, and other volunteers. She is an inspiration to others around her and has gotten several of her co-workers involved in Wisconsin Special Olympics.

Honorable Mentions

Michele Carter

*Civil Rights and Compliance Section Manager
Department of Transportation
Bureau of Transportation System Development*

Michele Carter personifies the citizen soldier as an employee of the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (DOT) and a member of the Wisconsin Army National Guard.

Michele retired with 23 years of service in the military reserves but has simultaneously committed 15 years of her professional experience to community service through workforce and business development. Michele currently manages and implements the Disadvantaged Business Enterprise, Title VI, Affirmative Action, Equal Employment Opportunity, and Labor Compliance Programs and their subsequent community outreach within the Department of Transportation including the continual development, monitoring and evaluation of each program.

Michele's responsibilities touch many, if not all, phases of civil rights both inside and outside of DOT. Michele is a hands-on manager who proves that Title VI and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 does not just happen in the office behind a computer. Michele's great commitment to the people of Wisconsin goes beyond her normal job duties, where in any given week she travels the state from Kenosha to Green Bay, and from Milwaukee to Madison and beyond, holding forums with community groups, displaced workers, contractors and elected officials seeking to ensure that civil rights, equal employment opportunity, fair wages and business opportunities are extended to women and minorities on the Department's construction projects.

In 2005 she received the Governor's Legacy Award for Launching the Transportation Alliance for New Solutions Program in 2005. When conventional job fairs failed to deliver workers, she pioneered this job program for distressed urban residents and prepared them for the construction labor force on WisDOT projects. Michele's extraordinary efforts were exemplified in the great success the department had in achieving participation of women and minority businesses and laborers on the Marquette Interchange Project in Milwaukee.

Michele is a well-rounded individual serving on numerous boards and committees. She demonstrated exceptional leadership in coalition-building among divergent and conflicting stakeholders and special interest groups evidenced by the innovative solutions to employment and business opportunities

for disadvantaged business owners and underutilized workforce. Her coordination of resources and cultivation of staff have had a direct impact on the number and diversity in the construction workforce on WisDOT first Mega project that will be replicated locally and national as a model for equity and inclusion initiated by Wisconsin's leadership.

Tina Cruse

*Revenue Field Auditor
Department of Revenue
Division of Income, Sales and Excise*

Tina Cruse has spent her career with the Department of Revenue for the past 17 years. In 2001, Tina took the initiative to establish a base of operations in the McCoy Public Library in Shullsburg to provide taxpayer assistance services for three hours every Wednesday night during the tax-filing season. She pursued this opportunity to serve her community on her own and has successfully carried it out for eight consecutive tax seasons. Because of Tina's strong commitment and determination, the McCoy Public Library became an official Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) site for the 2009 tax filing season.

In 2008, the Director of the McCoy Public Library, Carol Stoudt, submitted a letter to the editor of the *Darlington Republican Journal* thanking Tina for this extraordinary service to her community. Tax season is usually a stressful time for most people. This year was made even more so with the Economic Stimulus payment that required people who did not usually file taxes to fill out forms to receive their payment. It was confusing for many residents and the Shullsburg community was fortunate to have Tina available to answer tax questions which helped relieve some of the stress. For the past several years, Tina has selflessly volunteered her time from the beginning of February through April to help answer questions and navigate the thorny halls of the Tax Code. She has been volunteering at the McCoy Public Library on Wednesday evenings and spending hours helping people get through tax season as painlessly as possible.

From Homestead Credit forms to questions of what is deductible to helping with E-filing of forms, Tina has cheerfully helped countless patrons complete their tax returns. People are very grateful for Tina's time and expertise that she has shared with the community. The nature of Tina's job is such that positive feedback from external customers is a rather infrequent occurrence, so it is very nice to hear that her efforts in providing taxpayer assistance are appreciated by those she serves.

This unforced and unselfish pursuit of community service by Tina demonstrates exceptional leadership in her job as well as in her community and is an example of continuing Virginia Hart's legacy of exemplary public service. She has been an outstanding public servant for the Department of Revenue and for the State of Wisconsin.

Mary Kay Kollat

Reentry Director

Department of Corrections

Office of the Secretary

Mary Kay isn't just "making a difference" in her work; she is working every day to make our world a better place, by keeping Wisconsin safe for all its citizens. A somewhat quiet yet energetic leader, she ably leads the largest state cabinet agency's Reentry initiative, a strategy that promotes offender accountability, successful offender reintegration and supervision in the community, and consequent reduction of crime in our communities. She works daily to redefine the way correctional resources are deployed to dramatically enhance public safety. Through her efforts and those of many others for whom she provides leadership and guidance, Wisconsin will be a safer place.

Mary Kay's professional mission is daunting, but one that she energetically pursues on a daily basis. The Wisconsin Prison System currently incarcerates over 22,000 offenders, 97% of whom will one day complete their prison time and be released into the community. While recognizing that offender accountability is the very heart of the criminal justice and corrections systems, the public is obviously best served if offenders also have the opportunity to successfully reintegrate into society as law-abiding citizens when they are released.

Through Mary Kay's leadership to increase successful prisoner reentry into communities, critical goals of crime reduction, fewer new crime victims, reduced criminal justice costs and, most importantly, safer families and communities are the result. She promotes the reentry philosophy, initiatives, and performance measurement, motivating others to do the same along the way through her infectious "can do" spirit.

Mary Kay knows well how to guide and coordinate the activities of others. She possesses the gift of motivating people without the need to possess "organizational chart" positional authority over them; instead, she is a natural team leader. Her work with Reentry may best be analogized to that of an orchestra conductor: Mary Kay is well-respected by those with whom she works, and the department has received numerous comments and correspondence from both department staff and external partner groups singing Mary Kay's praises.

Trudi Laganowski

Social Worker

Department of Children and Families

Division of Safety and Permanence

Trudi has been a Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare Initial Assessment Social Worker since the Bureau's inception in 1997. She is kind, caring and considerate with the children and families she serves, and diligent about her primary role of keeping children safe. She keeps a positive and professional attitude, always focusing on achieving positive outcomes for the children and families served. Trudi is honest, ethical and lives the creed that all people deserve dignity and compassion. Trudi shares and encourages teamwork in all of her professional endeavors, which has an enormous impact on her co-workers and enhances the relationships with partner agencies.

Trudi also recognizes the importance of educating key stakeholders about the nature of the work that BMCW social workers do. She has volunteered many times to have judicial members, state administrative leaders, and partner agency personnel shadow her in the field to facilitate a better understanding of the role and duties for Initial Assessment workers. She is first to help co-workers with challenging cases, and will often sacrifice her own plans to meet the needs of the agency. In addition, Trudi has recently taken on additional duties as a mentor to new workers. She currently mentors nine staff on the training team, providing support and hands-on educational experiences to help new staff understand and implement the comprehensive assessment process.

She is an extremely hard worker with organizing skills that enhance the quality and quantity of her work. Trudi is a pleasure to work with and offers ideas that help improve the services BMCW provides to children and families. Trudi has touched too many families to capture in a paragraph or a page. In one of her cases, a grandmother had taken in two young children while her daughter faced an extended forced absence. This grandmother became overwhelmed and did not feel properly prepared to meet the children's needs. She lost her job and her housing, leaving the family homeless and without a source of income. Trudi helped to stabilize the family together in a shelter. At the same time, Trudi connected the grandmother to the W2 program, where she acquired help finding a job and an apartment. Trudi helped the grandmother acquire philanthropic resources to set up furnishings and to access community resources to support her care for these young children. Each step required research, discussion, and action. Each step was taken together with (as opposed to on behalf of) the grandmother of these children. Trudi's supervisor noted that maybe most importantly, Trudi has followed up at every point to make sure that the connections taking place actually resulted in better outcomes for these children. In summary, Trudi Laganowski is a state employee who directly and positively impacts the lives of children and families in extremely trying circumstances.

Sandy Stankevich

Civil Engineer

Department of Transportation

Division of Transportation System Development

Sandy transferred from project development to the planning section in the North Central region just over two years ago as a Civil Engineer Senior. The position was a newly created position intended to bring more engineering expertise to the planning process. Sandy stepped up to those challenges and made the transition seem effortless. Shortly after accepting her new position, the region proceeded with a tribal coordination initiative. She was approached by management to take on development of this new effort, which would increase communication with tribal communities and improve the working relationship between the region and the tribes. With the goals for the position broadly defined, Sandy worked to understand the issues and created a vision for addressing the concerns and maximizing the opportunities for bringing people together. She has used her technical skills as an engineer as well as personal skills to build credibility and developed relationships that have addressed real world, practical issues of safety and mobility.

Sandy has made great strides in the area of tribal relations with the region and throughout the state. While still fulfilling her corridor planning obligations Sandy's has worked passionately to bring about real changes in how the DOT works with the various tribes in our State. She has been a true leader in assisting the DOT Statewide Tribal Liaison in implementing Governor Doyle's Executive Order #39. Her focus on improving communications with the tribes has turned it into a truly constructive working relationship. The level of trust and respect between our staff and the tribal members have greatly increased since Sandy began working as the coordinator.

Sandy does all this with true professionalism. She is also a great citizen in supporting her community and the area surrounding her Northwoods hometown. She is always willing to give that little extra to get the job done. Sandy's ability to move DOT into a position of trust and confidence with the tribes is truly a noteworthy accomplishment. It is a clear demonstration of a very unique set of skills, special dedication and remarkable sensitivity along with a focus and understanding of the significance of the issue. These same skills and unique personal character are also demonstrated in Sandy's community and personal life and are recognized by her coworkers, family and neighbors.

Lynnette Traas

Enforcement Specialist

Department of Health Services

Bureau of Assisted Living

Lynnette is an enforcement specialist within the Bureau of Assisted Living. Her job is to review inspections of assisted living facilities and determine the type of sanction to apply. Six years ago she took on her job as a responsibility to help improve an expanding assisted living industry that was caring for some of Wisconsin's most vulnerable citizens. She has changed the enforcement methods from being punitive to one that used creative enforcement to help facilities correct noncompliance and to sustain compliance. The enforcement approach also used swift, aggressive actions for those facilities with egregious non-compliance where harm was occurring to residents. Lynnette wrote stories about some of the tragic problems we were identifying in assisted living facilities and shared these stories with key stakeholders including advocates, Department of Justice, state and county funding agencies and provider associations. These stakeholders began using these stories to implement changes to this industry that has resulted in significant improvement.

In addition to the excellent work that she produces, Lynnette continues to strive for improvement with new and efficient ways of accomplishing the work always with the Bureau's mission at the forefront. During this six-year period, Lynnette has received statewide, national awards for the work she has initiated in her role with the Bureau of Assisted Living. Lynnette is held in very high esteem by her peers, supervisors and the key stakeholders she works with throughout Wisconsin. The citizens residing in assisted living facilities are safer and better protected because of the work of this one remarkable woman.

Patty Zallar

IS System Services Consultant/Administrator

Department of Revenue

Division of Technology Services

Patty Zallar began her public service career in the field of computer programming first at the Department of Justice, and then eventually transferring to the Department of Revenue in 1988. Patty assumed increasingly greater responsibility as she improved her skills, gained knowledge, and proved her expertise; eventually leading the programming team that supported the individual income tax processing system. When that mainframe system was retired recently, Patty joined the system requirements team.

(continued next page)

She eagerly embraced the task of learning a new discipline and methodology and readily assumed leadership. She put to good use her understanding of the "big picture" of how Revenue works and the customer trust she has developed throughout Revenue in her nearly two decades of service is remarkable.

Patty takes initiative and naturally assumes leadership in the workplace, overcoming any challenges including the vision impairment she has, resulting from a condition that began in early childhood.

Like many other parents, Patty is actively involved in her son's school, both on parent committees and in the classroom. Patty is passionate about and advocates for acceptance and diversity in other ways as well. At Revenue she is a member of the Diversity Advisory Council and organizes regular Brown Bag luncheon seminars on many different topics. In February 2008, Patty was selected by Prevent Blindness America as one of the delegates to represent Wisconsin in the "Eyes on Capitol Hill" campaign in Washington, DC. She and Carlee (her guide dog) met with staff from Senator Kohl's, Senator Feingold's, and Representative Baldwin's offices while there.

Patty also instituted the First Annual Save Sight Night with the Madison Mallards last year. She developed the idea, initiated talks with the Mallards promotion and marketing teams, and received their approval, and led the efforts to make the event happen.



Past Award Recipients

1 st Award	Ellen Vogel
2 nd Award	Ruth Louise-Hine
3 rd Award	Mabel Smith-Reed
4 th Award	Ruthe Badger
5 th Award	Jean Kioski
6 th Award	Daisy Cubias
7 th Award	Evie Duesterbeck
8 th Award	Vicki Bennington
9 th Award	Mary Ellen Franson
10 th Award	Debra Schwab
11 th Award	Annette Weissbach
12 th Award	Loriann Wunder
13 th Award	Jeanne Meyer
14 th Award	Celeste Hoze and Amy Rivers
15 th Award	Delores Ducklow
16 th Award	Sandee Pease
17 th Award	Lady Campbell
18 th Award	Harriet Schoenebeck
19 th Award	Janice Cummings and Kristine Martineau
20 th Award	Karen Morgan
21 st Award	Roxanne Nelezen Chronert
22 nd Award	Joan Sanzen
23 rd Award	Gena L. Jarr
24 th Award	Peggy Meyers
25 th Award	Shawna Stringham

Award Committee

Mary Becker
Ed Kehl
Leean White

Contributing Organizations





Friends of Virginia Hart

We have joined with other Wisconsin leaders to create an endowment to keep the Virginia Hart Special Recognition Award alive. I hope you will join us.

Virginia Hart was Wisconsin's first woman cabinet member. She also served as Secretary of the Department of Regulation and Licensing, Chairperson of the Department of Industry, Labor and Human Relations, and Chairperson of the Labor and Industry Review Commission. On March 24, 2007, Virginia Hart passed away at the age of 92.

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We are asking you to make a tax-deductible donation. By joining the Friends of Virginia Hart, you will help ensure her legacy continues, and that women in Wisconsin State service are recognized for their contributions.

Our goal is to raise \$20,000 to sustain the Virginia Hart Special Recognition Award into perpetuity. With your donation, we can make this happen.

Sincerely,

Eileen D. Mershart, CISW
CEO, YWCA

Mary E. Panzer
President, Panzer Consulting

Sponsorship Levels and Benefits (select one)

Give Today and We Can Double Your Contribution!
Wisconsin Women In Government has graciously agreed
to match all contributions received by Sept. 30, 2009!
(Not to exceed \$5000)

Friends of Virginia Hart
\$100 to \$499

Your name will appear annually in
the Virginia Hart Special Recognition
Award event program.

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Special Recognition Awards event
program.

Virginia Hart Platinum Sponsor
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Name or organization logo will appear
annually in the Virginia Hart Special
Recognition Awards event program and
recognized at the event reception.

Other - I would like
to make a tax deductible
contribution to the
Friends of Virginia Hart

\$ _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

E-mail _____

Phone Number (_____) _____

How would you like for your name to appear annually in the Award
Program? _____

I am interested in hearing about women's networking opportunities
in Wisconsin.

Please make checks payable to: WI Women's Network. Return this card
with your check to: FVH c/o 101 E. Wilson St. 4th Floor, PO Box 7855, Madison, WI
53707-7855. The fiscal agent for the Friends of Virginia Hart is a 501(c)(3) non-profit
corporation. Contributions are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.

For more information, please contact Jennifer Gebert, Office of State Employment
Relations, at (608) 267-2155 or email Jennifer.Gebert@Wisconsin.gov.