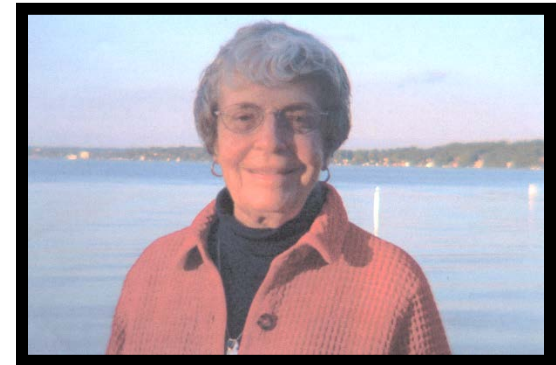


Thirty Third Annual

Virginia Hart  
Special Recognition Award



May 26, 2016

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 chairperson of the Labor and Industry Review Commission.

Ms. Hart was a superb advocate for workers' rights from the very start of her career. First as a social worker in Rochester, New York, later as a worker for the International Garment Workers Union in Tennessee during the 1940's. When she moved to Wisconsin, she taught at the UW-Madison School for Workers while earning a master's degree in labor economics in 1947.

In the 1960's, Ms. Hart helped set up the Community Welfare Council, which later became the Community Action Commission of Dane County. She served as its president from 1967-1969.

She was appointed to two terms on the Police and Fire Commission where she worked to improve opportunities for women both in the Madison Fire Department and the Madison Police Department.

She helped to form the Group Health Cooperative of South Central Wisconsin, was executive secretary of the Democratic Party of Wisconsin, and more recently was involved in the Dudgeon—Monroe Neighborhood Association in Madison.

Ms. Hart was a world traveler. She and Henry Hart, her husband of 67 years, backpacked in the Rockies, the Andes, and the Himalayas. She also worked as a labor education specialist at the University of Hawaii and for the Agency for International Development in New Delhi, India.

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 age 92.

With the generous help of contributors, the fund has been able to sustain the program for 30 years. With continued support, we hope to create an endowment to keep the Virginia Hart special recognition award alive for many years to come.

The recognition award is administered by the DOA-Division of Personnel Management.

## About the Award

The Virginia Hart award recognizes “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 their job descriptions, sustained, extraordinary achievement of assigned tasks, performance recognition from clients, community service, self-improvement, and the ability to overcome obstacles to performance.

## Awards Program

### Welcome

Gregory L. Gracz, Administrator  
DOA-Division of Personnel Management

### Remarks

Dawn Vick, Administrator  
DOA - Intergovernmental Relations

### Presentation of Honorable Mention Awards

### Presentation of Virginia Hart Special Recognition Award

### Concluding Remarks

Gregory L. Gracz

*~Please join us for light refreshments after the program has concluded~*

# 2016 Virginia Hart Special Recognition Award Recipient

*Jennifer Grimes*

Department of Transportation

*Environmental Analysis & Review Specialist  
Department of Transportation  
Division of Transportation System Development*

Jennifer (Jenny) Grimes is the Environmental Coordinator for the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT), Southwest (SW) Region Mega Projects Team and assists the SW Region Major Studies Team.

Jenny earned her Bachelor of Science in Environmental Engineering and Reclamation from the University of Platteville in 2000. She began her career as a civil engineer, but her passion for the environmental aspects of the planning, design and construction of infrastructure projects led her to apply for an Environmental Analysis and Review Specialist vacancy. She quickly excelled in the position and became an indispensable resource for the Region, her statewide counterparts and Central Office; and a respected liaison to environmental agencies and Federal Highway Administration (FHWA).

As a new environmental specialist, she initially spent about a decade at the SW Region and was primarily involved in the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process for the Region's most complex planning, design and construction projects.

Documentation (along with dissemination) is an essential component of the NEPA project development process, which supports and complements public involvement and interagency coordination. NEPA requires that government agencies disclose the results of their analysis and the effects of project implementation on the environment and solicit comments on the proposals from interested and affected parties (tribal, agriculture, waterways, wetlands, etc.).

The purpose of documenting the NEPA process is to provide complete disclosure to the public, allow others an opportunity to provide input and comment on proposals, alternatives, and environmental impacts; makes environmental commitments that must be followed through during final design and/or construction; and provide the appropriate information for the decision-maker to make a reasoned choice among design alternatives.

Central Office often taps her knowledge for updates to policy and guidance documentation and to provide training. In 2011, she decided to transfer to Central Office to effect statewide policy and training. Within a year, she returned to the Region to literally get her boots back in the mud and support the Major Studies and Mega Project teams while continuing to assist with statewide efforts when possible. She continually

seeks unique training opportunities to further her knowledge and share with her colleagues.

Her time is split between the Mega Projects Team (I-39/90 Illinois State Line to Madison expansion and US 18/151 Verona Road /Beltline reconstruction) and the Major Studies Team (several study projects including the Madison Beltline, US 51 Stoughton to McFarland, US 51 Madison to DeForest, US 12/18 Freeway Conversion, I-39/90/94 Madison to Portage, and I-90/94 Wisconsin Dells to Portage). Jenny is successfully managing a very heavy workload. She is willing to put in extra time to get the job done to meet critical deadlines and to the highest quality.

Despite multiple daily meetings at multiple offices, she is able to block out uninterrupted quiet time to read and provide reviews of hundreds upon hundreds of pages of environmental documents. She shares her progress with the team and does everything possible to ensure necessary reviews and required permit approvals are in place for construction. Jenny is very proactive, ensuring that the team is aware of new and existing environmental requirements and works with them to minimize impacts to environmental resources. She has a great ability to interpret the requirements and explain the effects to the team such as the federal and state threatened Northern Long-Eared Bat (NLEB) and "Updated FHWA - WisDOT Programmatic Agreement for Categorical Exclusions" (a modified NEPA process). In response to the NLEB requirements, she developed contract language and forms to be used statewide.

While being the sole environmental coordinator for the Mega Team, the SW Region Major Studies team has another environmental coordinator position and they share the workload. When her Region counterpart left WisDOT in November 2014, Jenny picked up much of the workload. A replacement was hired in February 2015, so Jenny assisted with the transition and provided on-the-job training to new staff. Her mentoring helped get new staff up to speed quickly and they have become an effective team to support the planning studies throughout the NEPA process.

Her return to the Region was especially beneficial when FHWA requested a re-evaluation of the environmental impacts along the 45-mile I-39/90 expansion project due to refinements to the design. Jenny was heavily involved in the development and review of the first NEPA document. She put forth a great effort and coordinated with a consultant counterpart to provide a detailed, yet concise re-evaluation of the environmental impacts of the I-39/90 project at the current level of design. This took a significant amount of time to gather information from the design teams, coordinate with various environmental agencies and FHWA, and finally meeting with WisDOT- Environmental Process and Documentation Section and FHWA for a consensus. She was highly complimented on the quality and presentation of the report.

Jenny successfully managed the development of the World Dairy Center mitigation site near Madison. The Wisconsin state policy on wetland mitigation banking is established through a Cooperative Agreement between WisDOT and Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR). After all practicable measures have been taken to avoid the aquatic resource followed by planning to minimize the impact to the resource; compensation for the unavoidable loss may be required. This was a challenging task as it required compliance to new regulations that only one other site in the state has been through. She completed various field work with WDNR and United States Army Corps

of Engineers (USAGE) to review detention ponds, hazardous materials sampling, wetlands, buried tanks, access to the site, and plantings. Jenny provided the consultant's conceptual plan draft to the Interagency Review Team (IRT), provided the plan for public notice, and wrote the environmental document to obtain approval from USAGE for the wetland mitigation bank. The site is now available for over 38 acres of wetland credits (with another 20 acres pending approval by USAGE) and will be used for the I-39/90 Illinois State Line to Madison expansion project.

In addition to "normal" environmental coordination for the US 12/18 at WIS 73 project on new alignment, Jenny was instrumental to find a suitable mitigation site for a property easement designated under the US Department of Agriculture (USDA), National Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), and Wetland Reserve Program (WRP). The WRP provides financial and technical assistance to help conserve wetlands and their related benefits. The process to locate the site, coordinate with property owners and obtain federal approval took over two years to complete.

Jenny is in the final stages of coordinating an innovative living snow fence and native planting plan for the I-39/90 corridor. Normal practice is to include standard seeding and planting in the construction contract, which often results in a lack of maintenance and loss of desired vegetation with no recourse after the contract is closed. The new plan would be to hire a specialized contractor to install and maintain the vegetation and to purchase seed and plantings more adaptable to the soil conditions which include plants that encourage pollination. The Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) have contracted with researchers at the University of Wisconsin-Madison to develop a pollinator protection plan. The loss of pollinators and the major impact it has on agriculture has often been in the news in recent years. Honeybees as well as many other pollinators are threatened. The plan is intended to provide resources for Wisconsin residents to help in pollinator protection and conservation, and identify voluntary actions that the general public and stakeholder groups can take to help. The native planting plan she is developing will be a start for WisDOT to support this initiative statewide.

Jenny was an integral part in fostering the relationship with the community for the Lodi Rain Garden. It was an opportunity for WisDOT to partner with the Lodi Park Commission, Friends of Scenic Lodi Valley, WDNR, United States Geological Survey (USGS) and the University of Wisconsin in designing, building and maintaining the first large scale rain garden in Wisconsin. The project was in relation to the reconstruction of WIS 113 in 2002 to address storm water runoff prior to draining to Spring Creek. WisDOT built the rain garden and local volunteers planted over 4,000 prairie plants. The USGS and the WDNR received a \$50,000 grant from the US government to perform research on the effectiveness of the rain garden to reduce storm water runoff. The project continues to be maintained by the Master Gardeners of Lodi and is used by the schools as a teaching tool for students.

Jenny's dedicated work is the perfect example of how DOT and DNR work cooperatively, while simultaneously accomplishing the important mission of each department. While Jenny's job may not be glamorous or one that receives a lot of attention, she does incredibly important and positive work for the State of Wisconsin, the traveling public, and state natural resources; each and every day.

She works very hard to orchestrate the challenging balance between environmental regulations and stewardship, design and construction requirements, and budgets. This is not an easy task as it requires collaboration with engineers, contractors, municipalities, environmental regulators, consultants, etc., and doing so within the bureaucracy of a government agency. It takes a self-motivated, intelligent, and strong-willed person to fully understand the many competing demands of a project and successfully advocated for solutions that benefit the environment, public safety and enhance the communities in our State.

She takes her role in mitigating for the environmental impacts of highways very seriously. She is committed to creating mitigation bank sites that adequately restore prairie and wetland habitats and that can be passively managed in the future.

Jenny has an excellent working relationship with other agencies and her peers. She works around the clock when needed, and takes phone calls late in the day or while on vacation.

In addition to her professional life, she also exemplifies her commitment to public service in her private life. Annually, she participates in the United Way Day of Caring. She has been involved with collecting prairie seeds for Dane County and for the Holy Wisdom Monastery in Middleton. She has assisted in working on the Ice Age Trail in Dane County, removing invasive species. She has volunteered for painting homes in need and clearing yards. She has also given an even more personal gift - several feet of her hair (on many occasions) - to the Locks of Love campaign.

In summary, Jenny truly epitomizes the type of woman the Virginia Hart award is meant to recognize. She balances her personal life with a commitment to assisting the citizens of the state of Wisconsin and preserving its environmental resources for generations to come. For Jenny to receive the Virginia Hart award is a great honor not only for her, but would also reinforce what her co-workers already recognize in Jenny; that she is selfless in her love and passion for the State of Wisconsin and its natural resources.

# Honorable Mentions

## Beth Cunningham

*Civil Engineer Transportation (Project Manager)  
Department of Transportation  
Division of Design & Construction*

Beth Cunningham embodies the caring, influential and legacy-building qualities shown by Ms. Hart. Beth is known throughout the Wisconsin Department of Transportation's Northwest Region and beyond as one of the most knowledgeable, helpful, respected, and hard-working engineers and project managers.

Beth has overcome one of life's most ominous hardships: she is a cancer survivor. She was diagnosed with lymphoma in her junior year of college at UW Platteville. She moved to the Minneapolis/St. Paul area for six weeks of treatments. Although she was away from school, she managed to keep up with her coursework and even made the Dean's List that semester. Beth has carried this incredible dedication and work ethic into her professional life at DOT.

Beth has been the lead designer on several large, highly visible projects in her career. In early 2012, Beth was working as the lead designer on the Wisconsin approach to the new St. Croix River Crossing near Houlton, WI. The Wisconsin approach would include a series of projects between Houlton and New Richmond built over several years that would require significant effort and coordination with regulatory agencies, utilities, local officials, property owners, and the public. It was at that time Beth was offered a promotion to a Project Manager position in the department. She said she would only accept the job if she could hold on to her duties as lead designer on the Wisconsin approach projects. Although that seemed to be an impossible feat at the time, the deal was made and Beth was promoted. Since that time, she has basically been working two jobs, one leading the design efforts on the Wisconsin approach projects and one managing a unit of engineers and engineering specialists with design and construction responsibilities in Douglas, Burnett, Washburn, Polk, Barron, and St. Croix Counties. It's amazing to observe her ability to manage her duties in the group while continuing to fulfill responsibilities in her previous appointment. She does this working less than full-time, at least on paper. Beth works a 75% appointment by choice but she works many hours in the evenings and on weekends that don't show up on her timesheet. She routinely delivers at or above the level of a full-time employee.

Beth has been a wonderful public resource for the entire St. Croix River Crossing project which, except for the Wisconsin approach, is a MNDOT-led project. She has given many presentations and tours in the project area to local organizations and to the elementary school. She was asked to visit the Houlton Elementary School third grade class a second time because there were so many things the students wanted to ask her after her first class presentation. Beth is more than willing to volunteer to present the project and share information. She is a talented bridge between government and the public, a connection others may find difficult to achieve with large projects.

A few of Beth's projects have been awarded for excellence in highway design and construction. She won design awards for the expansion of State Highway 64 through the City of New Richmond and for the Radio Road interchange project in River Falls. Recently, a section of the Wisconsin approach to the St. Croix crossing was awarded as an outstanding highway construction project. Beth was not responsible for construction of the award-winning project but she was responsible for the design. Projects generally aren't awarded for excellence in construction if the design was poor. She is an outstanding resource on most all items related to highway design. It's very common for folks in DOT's Project Development, Planning, Operations, and Technical Services sections, as well as folks outside of DOT, to reach out to Beth for information. People value her knowledge and opinions. And she is a terrific teacher and mentor.

Young engineers know they are in good hands when Beth is working as their project manager. She has incredible patience for teaching and mentoring young engineers and the ability to lead them down a successful career path. Beth's efforts in teaching, along with her tireless commitment to her work and her contagious positive energy, have had a positive impact on the NW Region and we'll observe her influence on DOT as a whole for decades to come.

Outside of work, Beth is very active in her home community of Cumberland. She is involved heavily with her local church, sharing her talents in music and teaching. She serves as the choir accompanist, a bell and brass choir member, and a substitute church organist. She also helps the church by teaching confirmation class and Sunday school. She is a member of the Christian Education Committee, a member and volunteer for Vacation Bible School, and a member of grounds beautification committee.

Beth is also heavily involved in the local Cub Scouts. She and her husband Bryan are in charge of the local troop, and she spends a lot of her free time organizing meetings and events. She volunteers at the local school for her children's activities. She also serves her local community by collecting food for the food pantry and helping distribute to needy families. Beth also helped her town by cleaning up the local recycling area.

Beth assists the American Cancer Society by serving on the planning committee for the annual Cancer Walk near her childhood hometown in Luck, where her mother works as the chair for the local organization. She works at the annual garage sale where all proceeds go to the American Cancer Society. Beth also helps to run an annual fundraising event where all proceeds go towards the American Cancer Society and local families in need due to cancer.

Beth is a worthy recipient of the Virginia Hart Award based on her personality, her determination, her desire to help others and her ability to improve the Department of Transportation through her teaching and mentoring efforts. She may never know the depth and breadth of her influence to the public and WisDOT, but rest assured she is making a huge positive impact to the people of Wisconsin, both now and in the years to come.

# Sharon Walk

*Executive Staff Assistant*

*Department of Employee Trust Funds*

*Office of the Secretary*

Sharon has been with the State of Wisconsin for 36 years. She started in January 1980 at the then Department of Health and Social Services. A year later moved to the Wisconsin Employment Relations Commission.

In 1984, Sharon became a program assistant supervisor at the Department of Administration, Division of Buildings and Grounds at the State Capitol, where she supervised tour guides and maintenance crews.

In 1986, Sharon moved on to the Department of Justice, coordinating with the agency legal staff, later transferring into a management information technician.

Fortunately for the Department of Employee Trust Funds (ETF), Sharon decided to start working in ETF's support services section in 1994 and has committed herself to making ETF the best agency in state government ever sense.

Sharon started off demonstrating extraordinary helpfulness and friendliness when serving ETF customers and working with coworkers. Her work ethic and commitment to making ETF a better place have been recognized by her supervisors and management, as she's been regularly promoted to new jobs in the department. As an executive staff assistant, she held increasingly important and responsible roles as the agency's appeal coordinator, Wisconsin Deferred Compensation (WDC) Board and Group Insurance Board (GIB) liaison and then in 2008 she was promoted to the Executive Staff Supervisor working directly for the Department's Secretary. Sharon is the rock behind the Secretary's Office. She is extremely customer centric and encounters every day with professionalism and integrity. She is the go-to person and you can give almost anything to Sharon and she comes up with an idea or makes it happen.

As the first person many people talk with in the Secretary's Office, Sharon is the voice of ETF. She provides a professional, yet thoughtful first impression for anyone seeking information or resolutions to problems. She knows who at ETF can best address the inquiry, and manages that information flow in a seamless and efficient manner. She is patient and professional, even in situations when the member is frustrated and less than polite.

Sharon goes above and beyond to make ETF a great place to work with her positive attitude; enthusiastic personality; and willingness to take on any project and see it through. She has a vast knowledge about all the benefits ETF administers having served as the Board Coordinator for many years. She always made Board members feel comfortable at the board meetings. Sharon has always made ETF's customers the priority. If she didn't know the answer to a question she researched it until she found the answer.

By December of 1994, only eight months into the job, Sharon was Staff Services Appeals Coordinator and co-chair of the SECC campaign (Partners in Giving). This decision marked the beginning of a 22 year commitment to Partners in Giving and ETF's award winning participation levels.

ETF has a strong commitment to the campaign and Sharon has kept it going, year after year. She has organized book/media sale events, served as a coordinator, and helps with other fundraisers.

Sharon's start at ETF also included being a part of what we're now calling the "Historic Imaging Project"-the Imaging and Basic Workflow Projects that were going on starting way back in 1995. She has continued her positive commitment to making specific contributions to improving ETF, including her eventual contributions to the implementation of Step 2000 and now, MyETF and ETF's new Benefit Administration System (BAS). In the latest project she has been part of the BAS Quality Assurance & Support Team, meaning she was a dedicated BAS/MyETF helper for Rollout 1's go-live, and she has served as executive support to the TIM Steering Team.

Sharon was also an integral part in the start of ETF's original call center back in 2000. Sharon and another staff member were the first (and only) two employees of the call center for many months, and according to the manager, did a great job holding down the fort before ETF eventually hired 15 call center specialists. It is this positive can-do attitude that makes Sharon a special employee. She sees something that needs to be done, she not only does it-she does it well.

In 2005, Sharon embarked on another long-term commitment with the Affirmative Action Committee (AAC) and the Lincoln School partnership. Sharon's persistence is the reason that the partnership exists. Sharon was on the AAC that determined ETF should be a neighborhood partner to Lincoln Elementary School, supporting the school's effort to educate students. ETF has had reading buddies with 5th grade students for many years, and staff enjoys an annual music concert by the students.

In the fall of 2014, Sharon helped expand the reading buddies to include over 20 writing buddies (pen pals) in one classroom. ETF staff is paired with a student and take turns writing to each other in a notebook that travels between students and staff. After writing letters to each other for seven months last year, Sharon organized a "meet and greet" pizza lunch so that the staff and students could meet their pen pals, face-to-face. The pen pal writing project was wildly popular with both students and staff, so much so that it was expanded to the entire 5th grade at Lincoln Elementary in 2015.

Sharon is also the key supporter of the annual hat and mitten drive, as well as the fall school supply drive. Last year, the AAC expanded again on this relationship and became a sponsor helping to fund college scholarships for Lincoln School children. Without Sharon's commitment, none of this would be possible. Sharon has continued on her mission of making ETF a wonderful place to work doing good work for its customers.

Currently, she is on the agency's brand management workgroup, the Board of Supervisors, and the book club. As the Executive Staff Supervisor, Sharon is also an

amazing mentor to her staff. She supports their efforts to become valued members of ETF. Sharon has encouraged her staff to learn new skills, and assume greater responsibility in their roles. This can be seen in the support of her staff's facilitation training and as a member of the PIT Crew. It is this innovative foresight that makes Sharon so special

Innovation, creativity, and efficiency are all words that describe Sharon. Sharon has been the leader and collaborator on many ETF projects and continues this performance. This can be seen in her commitment and leadership in moving the Boards to electronic voting. This initiative has saved the department, and ultimately members, a significant amount of money. Additionally, when the ETF Board and Group Insurance Board (GIB) outgrew rented meeting spaces, she helped lead the effort to find new meeting locations. This is another example of innovative, creative thinking that saved money.

Moreover, Sharon helped improve these meetings by working with IT staff to improve recordings of the meetings, saving the board liaisons time while transcribing the minutes. She created the controlled correspondence process, which has been a valuable tool to ensure that the Secretary's office stays abreast of high-level issues and correspondence.

Lastly, Sharon created the Book Club, which offered an innovative and fun way for staff to read and discuss work related topics. This brought staff together from all levels of the agency and the outcome has been thought provoking discussions and growth on a personal and professional level.

This past year, Sharon launched the first online elections process for the boards and previous to that worked with Board members to make the meetings more paperless. Through her creation of the governance and reference manuals for our boards, Sharon was responsible for ETF receiving a 2011 Leadership Recognition Award from the National Association of Government Defined Contribution Administrators (NAGDCA).

Ultimately, Sharon is a wonderful worker/supervisor, good colleague and great friend. Despite working in a high-profile and potentially stressful part of ETF, Sharon rarely gets flustered. She is professional and organized, and willing to help when an emergency strikes. She stays late when needed, and is willing to do whatever it takes to support her staff, the executive team and the community. Sharon's overall work exhibits the ETF can-do spirit.

Sharon juggles multiple responsibilities for ETF with grace and patience. She oversees the very busy board liaison positions while also keeping the Department's executive leadership staff organized and prepared for their meetings. Despite regular interruptions and revisions to schedules, Sharon keeps things on track and does so in an effortless manner and without losing her patience. Sharon is always willing to step up where needed and able to balance any additional tasks with her day-to-day responsibilities. Sharon's staff describes her as a great mentor. She isn't critical and is always willing to help.

She exhibits a strong sense of ethics and doing the right things right. Due to her job responsibilities and position in the Secretary's Office, Sharon is privy to many

confidential conversations. She is a pillar of discretion, never talking about anything that may be confidential or controversial until a decision has been made public. Sharon is respected by the staff for her knowledge, compassion and integrity. She never hesitates to do the right thing for the agency, the staff, the community and the customers served. In return, Sharon has shown great compassion and respect for her colleagues in the same fashion.

Sharon is a woman of grace, patience, and dedication who is hard-working, fun, funny, compassionate, and professional. She exemplifies the qualities and contributions of this award every day to ensure the State of Wisconsin, the Communities and her family look forward and have a better tomorrow. Sharon is dedicated to serving the State of Wisconsin and to helping others reach their greatest potential. She's a role model to us all.



# Patricia Woodard

*Unemployment Insurance Supervisor  
Department of Workforce Development  
Division of Unemployment Insurance*

Patricia has worked for the Department of Workforce Development, in the Unemployment Insurance Division, since 1991. Patricia started as an Unemployment Benefits Specialist, and working steadily through the years has been promoted to an Unemployment Insurance Supervisor.

Patricia is an asset to the department and to the people of Wisconsin. She works closely with Adjudication Support and supervises 11 adjudicators to ensure they are upholding the unemployment laws and implementing department policies and procedures properly and timely. She is a fair supervisor who provides assistance not only to her unit and adjudication support, but to claims specialists, Claims supervisors, and other adjudication units as well. Patricia is very welcoming and will answer any questions staff members may have. The way she works with employees is exceptional as she politely provides clear explanations of the interpretation and application of the unemployment laws and policies, going above and beyond her expected job duties to share her knowledge and understanding with those she works with. Patricia is greatly respected by a vast number of adjudicators, lead workers, supervisors, members of adjudication support, claims specialists, claims lead workers, claims supervisors, and claims and adjudication managers. She definitely deserves that respect as she is an honest employee who works hard to ensure the equitable and proper execution of department policies and procedures and laws for the citizens of the state.

In addition to consistently providing her guidance throughout the Milwaukee Benefits Center, Patricia has also contributed her time, skills, and knowledge to help people across the state and the country. She has worked on several work-groups to help employees by improving the tools they use to effectively do their jobs. One such workgroup she was involved in was the Disputed Claims Manual Work-Group. The Manual is used by adjudication statewide to appropriately apply the unemployment laws. Patricia's involvement in developing such an instrument is not only a demonstration of her dedication to her job, the success of other employees; and the fair treatment of all, but it is just one example among many of how she goes above and beyond to improve the lives of those around her.

Besides participating in work-groups, she also volunteered to be the Employee Assistance Program point of contact for all employees in the Milwaukee Benefits Center for years prior to the introduction of the program. She was selected by her manager to attend the National Association of State Work Force Agencies (NASWA) and National UI Director's Conference too. Additionally, Patricia acted as the UI representative for the Milwaukee Chapter of the Milwaukee Area Workforce Investment Board, and she still currently sits on the board.

Patricia's generous and altruistic nature is not limited to the borders of Wisconsin, as she went above and beyond the requirements of her position by voluntarily traveling to Mississippi to assist with the adjudication of Mississippi's unemployment claims after

Hurricane Katrina. She continues to be available and willing to assist in any way possible.

Patricia's positive impact on the community is not limited to her job related activities. While working for the State of Wisconsin, she has held several roles in the community. She belongs to a sorority, Eta Phi Beta. The sorority's primary goal is to assist developmentally disabled individuals. Patricia has participated in the annual NITE of Jazz hosted by the sorority to raise money for developmentally disabled individuals, while also being responsible for the silent auction associated with the annual event.

While Patricia has consistently demonstrated exemplary performance in her job and provided extraordinary contributions to her workplace and the community to help others overcome hardships, this has not been done in the absence of her own hardships. Patricia was the primary caregiver for her mother when her mother was diagnosed with cancer. While she cared for her dying mother, she remained focused on her work and maintained her exceptional performance as evidenced by her promotion to an adjudication lead worker during that time. It is a hard struggle to watch a parent suffer, and for many that situation would likely have a negative impact on their work. That was not the case for her, however; Patricia handles challenges and stress very well and, unlike many, does not let the stress influence her disposition. For several years now, she has also been a caregiver for her 90+ year old father ensuring his needs are met, and all the while she has persevered in advancing her career without any performance issues, past or present.

Patricia is sincere and trustworthy, has a positive attitude and sense of humor, and knows how to handle setbacks and/or failures well. She is also confident while open to suggestion, an active listener, and an inspiration to those around her. She has been available and willing to assist staff members with personal and or professional guidance. Patricia is a very valuable individual working at the Milwaukee Benefits Center, and she is the exact unsung heroine for which the Virginia Hart Special Recognition Award was established.



Division of Personnel Management

A proud supporter of the  
**Virginia Hart  
Special Recognition Awards**



## Past Award Recipients

1 <sup>st</sup> Award	Ellen Vogel
2 <sup>nd</sup> Award	Ruth Louise-Hine
3 <sup>rd</sup> Award	Mabel Smith-Reed
4 <sup>th</sup> Award	Ruthe Badger
5 <sup>th</sup> Award	Jean Kioski
6 <sup>th</sup> Award	Daisy Cubias
7 <sup>th</sup> Award	Evie Duesterbeck
8 <sup>th</sup> Award	Vicki Bennington
9 <sup>th</sup> Award	Mary Ellen Franson
10 <sup>th</sup> Award	Debra Schwab
11 <sup>th</sup> Award	Annette Weissbach
12 <sup>th</sup> Award	Loriann Wunder
13 <sup>th</sup> Award	Jeanne Meyer
14 <sup>th</sup> Award	Celeste Hoze and Amy Rivers
15 <sup>th</sup> Award	Delores Ducklow
16 <sup>th</sup> Award	Sandee Pease
17 <sup>th</sup> Award	Lady Campbell
18 <sup>th</sup> Award	Harriet Schoenebeck
19 <sup>th</sup> Award	Janice Cummings and Kristine Martineau
20 <sup>th</sup> Award	Karen Morgan
21 <sup>st</sup> Award	Roxanne Nelezen Chronert
22 <sup>nd</sup> Award	Joan Sanzen
23 <sup>rd</sup> Award	Gena L. Jarr
24 <sup>th</sup> Award	Peggy Meyers
25 <sup>th</sup> Award	Shawna Stringham
26 <sup>th</sup> Award	Diane Siegler
27 <sup>th</sup> Award	Gail Mills
28 <sup>th</sup> Award	Sylvia Cantu Smith and Sharon Hunter
29 <sup>th</sup> Award	Janet Smith
30 <sup>th</sup> Award	Deb Brucaya
31 <sup>st</sup> Award	Patricia Banks
32 <sup>nd</sup> Award	Tamra Oman

## Award Program Manager

Dee Surillo

## Award Committee

Kitty Anderson  
Anna M. Biermeier  
Susan Buroker  
Jack Lawton  
Leanna Ware

**Congratulations to all the Virginia Hart  
Award Nominees!**



.....Women's Council.....  
· Wisconsin ·

## Nominees for 2016

Mary Pat Bohn  
Lorie Caffrey  
Cathy Crary  
Beth Cunningham  
Susan Fuszard  
Jennifer Grimes  
Tarna Hunter  
Kris Kalina  
Barbara Klug  
Deanna Krell  
Anne L. Reshadi  
Michelle Saunders  
Shelly Schueller  
Mallory Short  
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# Friends of Virginia Hart

We have joined with other Wisconsin leaders to create an endowment to keep the Virginia Hart Special Recognition Award alive. We 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.

Upon her 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. The Virginia Hart Special Recognition Award 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. The recipient is recognized at an award ceremony with a plaque and cash award. With the generous help of contributors, the fund has been able to sustain the program for 30 years. Help us establish an endowment so the award will live on for years to come.

We welcome your 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.

## Founders Circle

Mayor Dave Cieslewicz	Paulette Harder	Eileen Mershart
Jennifer Donnelly	Celia Jackson	Mary Louise Munts
Sheehan Donoghue	Ed Kehl	Mary Panzer
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## Sponsorship Levels and Benefits (select one)

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

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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.

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

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

Please make checks payable to: Wisconsin Women's Network

Return this card with your check to: Friends of Virginia Hart c/o DPM 101 E. Wilson St. 4<sup>th</sup> 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 Dee Surillo, DOA-Division of Personnel Management, at (608) 266-9820 or email [dominga.surillo@Wisconsin.gov](mailto:dominga.surillo@Wisconsin.gov).



# Friends of Virginia Hart

The Virginia Hart Special Recognition Award is available because of generous contributors.

## Friends of Virginia Hart (\$100-\$499)

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