



**CASE WESTERN RESERVE
UNIVERSITY**
Department of
Human Resources



Staff Service Awards Ceremony
Thursday, June 12, 2025
Thwing Student Center
Excelsior Ballroom

PROGRAM

Brunch Buffet

Welcome

Carolyn Gregory
Vice President for Human Resources

Presentation of Robin Kramer Volunteer Award and President's Award for Distinguished Service

Katie Brancato
Office of the President

Congratulatory Remarks

Adam Binkley
Staff Advisory Council, Chair

Presentation of Service Awards and Certificates

Jeremy Lewis
Training & Development Manager

Closing Remarks

Jeremy Lewis
Training & Development Manager

STAFF SERVICE AWARD RECIPIENTS

ROBIN KRAMER VOLUNTEER AWARD

NAME

Michelle Cseh

DEPARTMENT

Undergraduate Advising Support Office

PRESIDENT'S AWARD FOR DISTINGUISHED SERVICE

NAME

Jason Buitrago

Jennifer DeSantis

LaTasha Johnson

DEPARTMENT

Enrollment Management

Undergraduate Advising Support Office

Undergraduate Advising Support Office

45 YEAR HONOREE

NAME

Tayrn Smith

DEPARTMENT

Dean's Office - Arts & Sciences

35 YEAR HONOREES

NAME

Kimberly Blackmon

Laura Corrigan

Bernadette Erokwu

Peggy L R Harris

Lakshmi Kasturi

Marla Manning

Jennifer K. Nieves

Jay A. Ruffner

David Wright

DEPARTMENT

Residence Life

Office of Risk Management & Insurance

Radiology

Comprehensive Cancer Center

Hematology/Oncology

Infectious Disease

Dittrick Museum of Medical History

School of Law, Academic Services

School of Law, Information Technology

25 YEAR HONOREES

NAME

DEPARTMENT

Rimas Biliunas

University Technology

Karen Cohen

Campus Planning & Facilities
Management

Martina Croft

Undergraduate Advising Support
Office

Lori Duesler

Biology

John Dunn

Genetics

Paula Embury

Center for Global Health & Disease

Katherine Renee Evans

Custodial Services

Sheila Evensen

School of Medicine, Office of
Development & Alumni Relations

Vanessa Flenoy

Campus Security

Nivo Hanson

School of Medicine, Office of Curricular
Affairs

Sarah Ialacci

School of Medicine, Administrative
Research Office

Kevin Jones

Campus Security

Jill Kent

Division of Student Affairs

Lisa Kouns

Student Financial Services

Loretta Laffitte-Griffin

Controller's Office

Michael McLaurin

Custodial Services

Harry Menegay

Ophthalmology

Lorraine Nelson

Siegal Lifelong Learning

Ulrich Neuss

Genetics

Jennifer O'Connor-Neskey

School of Management, Custom
Programs

Gregory Paradise

Animal Resource Center

Carol Samuels

Oral & Maxillofacial Medicine &
Diagnostic Sciences

Michael Sefcek

Grounds Maintenance

Melody Stewart

Dental Reception Call Center

NAME

Charles Thomas
Sandy Torres
Laura Travis
Tammy Wallace
Carolyn Washick
Michael Whitted

DEPARTMENT

School of Medicine, Research Office
Pathology
Dittrick Museum of Medical History
Comprehensive Cancer Center
Human Resources
Housing Custodial

10 YEAR HONOREES**NAME**

Natalia Aladyshkina
Kathleen Anderson
Michelle Arendt
Graham Binnig
Elizabeth Bober

Kathleen Brancato
Pat Brandt
Ashley Bukach

Willie Mae Burns
Gregory Coffee
Gerri Collier
Robb Combs
Gail Daniels
Marvin Danielson

Darlana Dillard
Sarada Fuzzell

John Fye
Rajesh Gupta
Joyce Helton

DEPARTMENT

Institute for Molecular Medicine
Vice Dean Medical Education
Office of General Counsel
Facilities Services
Kelvin Smith Library, Public
Engagement
Office of the President
School of Nursing
Begun Center for Violence Prevention
Research & Education
University Technology
Pediatrics
Residence Life
Customer Support Services
Psychological Sciences
Campus Planning & Facilities
Management
Office of General Counsel
Population & Quantitative Health
Sciences
Environmental Affairs
Gastroenterology
Faculty Affairs

NAME

Catrina M Hutchins
Walid Jalabi
Leslie S. Johnson
Joy Knight
Ray Krajci
Todd Kramer
Tracy Krebs
Kristi Lehmer
James Lockridge
Ewa Malicki
Ken Matlock
Margaret V. Meek
Elizabeth Meinke

Marvin Miller
Rochelle Muchnicki

Stephanie Nelson
George O'Connell
Natalia (Buczkowski) Olley
Lance Parkin
Shaina Pearlman
Nicole M. Pilasky

Eboni Porter
Melanie Prestage
Maureen E. Purcell
Kevin Pye
David Retzer
Tanya D. Smith
Kristina Soja
Sunah Song
Grant Spearman

DEPARTMENT

University Technology
Technology Transfer Office
Materials Science & Engineering
Hematology/Oncology
Center for Global Health & Disease
School of Management, Dean's Office
Gastroenterology
School of Nursing
Custodial Services
Mechanical & Aerospace Engineering
Grounds Maintenance
Access Services
Kelvin Smith Library, Public
Engagement
Custodial Services
School of Management,
Interdisciplinary Studies
Custodial Services
Office of Student Conduct
Genetics
Sages
MediaVision
Health Education Campus - Samson
Pavilion - IT & AV
Disability Support Services
Comprehensive Cancer Center
Development & Communications
Housing Maintenance
Tinkham Veale University Center
School of Nursing
Vice Dean Medical Education
Institute of Computational Biology
Housing Custodial

NAME

Timothy Sullivan

Anna Thornton Matos

Ye Tian

Ernie Timbs

Melissa Van

Steven Webster

Chenobia Webster

Kenneth Wendt

Elizabeth Wilkes

Preston Wilkins

Chamois Williams

Erin Zaletel

DEPARTMENT

Campus Planning & Facilities
Management

Health Education Campus
Interprofessional Education

Institute of Computational Biology

Development & Communications

Case School of Engineering, Office of
the Dean

Biology

Mandel School of Applied Social
Sciences, Field Services

Customer Support Services

Student Affairs

Custodial Services

National Development & Major Gifts

Research Administration

ROBIN KRAMER VOLUNTEER AWARD

The Robin Kramer Volunteer Award honors a staff member whose volunteer service to the campus community has had a significant impact on colleagues, students, or visitors.

Case Western Reserve University created the Robin Kramer Volunteer Award in honor of Robin Kramer, a university employee whose qualities and commitment to volunteerism set a standard for distinguished service. Robin Kramer (August 5, 1955 - November 1, 2013) was known for her passion for serving the University and its employees. Robin was a friendly and familiar face of the Staff Advisory Council (SAC) and loved to welcome new members at the SAC New Member Orientation.

She also co-chaired the Elections and Staff Recognition Committees. Her family, friends, and co-workers remember her for her infectious smile, contagious laugh, concern, loyalty, and the support she demonstrated to the University community. Robin's enthusiasm and energy were evident in everything she did.



Michelle Cseh
Assistant Dean & Advisor
Undergraduate Advising Support Office

Whether advising students, supporting colleagues or volunteering across campus and beyond, Michelle Cseh brings unwavering dedication to everything she does.

As an advisor and assistant dean in the Undergraduate Advising Support Office—and a passionate advocate for student success—Cseh has made a profound impact through her work, including her many volunteer endeavors. Whether mentoring through the Emerging Leaders Program or supporting student achievement through the Provost Scholars program and Greek Life's Pytte Cup, she consistently goes above and beyond to foster an environment where students feel heard, valued and empowered to succeed.

"Through her passion for service and commitment to the CWRU community and beyond, Michelle has inspired others to give back and contribute in meaningful ways," her nominator wrote. "She is the reason I have myself continued to volunteer with CWRU."

In addition to her volunteer work with many campus programs, Cseh volunteers through her Master of Social Work program at CWRU, working with adults facing complex mental health challenges. She also volunteers her time supporting the Impact of Engineering on Society (ENGR 399) course, helping engineering students reflect on how they can design solutions to benefit society.

Despite her full-time role, graduate studies and responsibilities as a mother of two, Cseh is known for checking in on colleagues,

stepping in when others are out and encouraging those around her to engage with their communities.

Her nominators described her as their “#1 cheerleader”—someone who lifts up others without expecting anything in return.

PRESIDENT’S AWARD FOR DISTINGUISHED SERVICE

The President’s Award for Distinguished Service honors up to three staff members every year whose outstanding contributions to our campus culture has had a transformational effect on university colleagues, students, or visitors.

The President’s Award for Distinguished Service was created in honor of Roseanne Shaerban (May 9, 1958 – February 6, 1989), a university employee whose qualities and commitment set a standard for distinguished service. Her family, friends and co-workers remember her for the care, concern, loyalty and support she demonstrated to the university community. Roseanne was feisty, creative and exceptionally generous in her willingness to help others in need.



Jason Buitrago
Executive Director of Enrollment Management & Strategic Initiatives
Department of Enrollment Management

Recognized as a team player across academic and administrative units, Jason Buitrago champions Case Western Reserve University within the campus community and far beyond. As one award nominator put it, "There is not a better ambassador for CWRU than Jason Buitrago."

As one example of his leadership and dedication, Buitrago proactively spearheaded a working group of CWRU enrollment leaders to share best practices and find creative ways to work together. The idea came in response to the 2023 Supreme Court

ruling that universities could not use race as a factor in admissions decisions.

In 2024, he invited the Society for Advancing Chicanos/Hispanics and Native Americans in Science's leadership team to campus. The national organization, which cultivates diversity in the STEM field, met with representatives from several schools across the university to elevate the comprehensive clinical programs offered at Case Western Reserve.

Buitrago's strong work ethic not only delivers results—his positivity also inspires colleagues to do their best work. As one nominator shared, "His enthusiasm is infectious."



Jennifer DeSantis
Senior Associate Dean & Advisor
Undergraduate Advising Support Office

Jennifer DeSantis has built a reputation as a compassionate leader and advocate for students during her 12 years of service at Case Western Reserve University. As senior associate dean in the Undergraduate Advising Support Office, she approaches her work with a level of care, foresight and commitment that

continues to shape student experiences and strengthen the university community.

Known for her empathy and leadership, DeSantis works closely with students navigating complex academic and personal challenges, creating a safe, supportive environment where students feel seen and empowered. A nominator noted that DeSantis routinely goes the extra mile, checking in with students, connecting them with critical resources and offering encouragement at every turn.

“Jenn’s ability to anticipate challenges and create programs that meet those needs is a testament to her forward-thinking leadership, and her impact is felt across campus,” a nominator wrote. “Students from diverse backgrounds, faculty and colleagues have all benefited from her compassion, insight and dedication.”

DeSantis’s impact extends far beyond individual advising through her service on numerous academic policy and student support committees—including the Dean’s Committee, Academic Standing, Special Petitions and assessment committees. She also played a central role in navigating the launch of the university’s reimagined advising model and successfully led the Undergraduate Advising Support Office through a yearlong leadership transition.

Her nominator added: “Jenn is a transformative figure at Case Western Reserve, positively impacting students, faculty and the

broader community. Her tireless efforts ensure that our campus is a place where students not only succeed but thrive."



LaTasha Johnson
Associate Dean & Advisor
Undergraduate Advising Support Office

LaTasha Johnson's impact at Case Western Reserve University is evident through the hundreds of students she advises, the programs she oversees and the committees she helps lead.

Since joining the university in 2018, Johnson has served in a range of roles that showcase her strength as a thoughtful mentor, collaborative leader and advocate for student success.

Currently an associate dean in the Undergraduate Advising Support Office, Johnson advises more than 200 students while also overseeing CWRU's prestigious national fellowship programs, including Fulbright, Rhodes and Marshall. Her colleagues describe her as one of the hardest-working individuals on campus—someone who leads without seeking recognition, and whose efforts have a lasting impact on students, faculty and staff.

"LaTasha stands out for her ability to guide and inspire those around her," her nominator said. "She is not simply an advisor, but a trusted mentor who provides guidance in both academic and personal growth."

Beyond advising, Johnson is a consistent force in fostering a welcoming and supportive environment for all members of the CWRU community. Through her work as a Title IX advisor, and former roles as a Diversity 360 facilitator and chair of the Staff of Color Alliance, she has helped build spaces where individuals from all backgrounds feel they belong.

"LaTasha does so much work in making sure others get the recognition they deserve through awards and fellowships," a nominator noted. "It's time to recognize her and give her the award instead."

35 YEAR HONOREES

Kimberly Blackmon

Kimberly's favorite memory was during her first day on campus. She met someone who had been at the university for 20 years and remembers thinking, "I would never be here for that many years." Well, she is proud to say that she has been with the university for 35 years. The moment Kimberly arrived on campus, she felt like she belonged here. Her proudest accomplishment is having lasting relationships with the staff and students. She has built many relationships with those who are still on campus and those who have also left campus. The relationships and experiences have enriched her life and have made Kimberly into the person she is today. In her free time, Kimberly volunteers at Greater Cleveland Food Bank and Habitat for Humanity. She has also served on the Staff Advisory Council and has participated in conferences for Administrative Assistant Professionals.

Laura Corrigan

Laura has accumulated so many memories over the years, but her favorite is working with many wonderful people throughout the years and creating a lot of good memories. She is most proud of the support and guidance that she has been able to provide to faculty and staff during her tenure at CWRU. Whether it involves an insurance claim, a work-related injury or another situation, Laura has been fortunate enough in her position to assist employees as our policies allow. She considers it her responsibility to make the procedures as easy and seamless as possible for those who incur any insurance situation. In the past, she volunteered at a children's emergency shelter home for several hours a week, which was rewarding because any time you can add a little joy and/or comfort to someone, especially a child, it is its own reward. Since that ended, Laura volunteers at her community center throughout the year as time permits. As part of her work as CWRU's Risk & Insurance Manager, she has also been on various committees and/or organizations.

Bernadette Erokwu

Bernadette's favorite memory was seeing her children enjoy tuition waivers. One child who wanted to study in another state ended up attending CWRU. She was later highly appreciative of Bernadette's employment, tenacity and her education. To Bernadette's surprise, the child thanked her during a Multicultural Graduation Program, which was also attended by former CWRU President Barbara Snyder. Bernadette's proudest accomplishment includes lending her expertise to many principal investigators, faculty, staff, graduate students and undergraduates primarily at CWRU and other neighboring research institutions such as the Cleveland Clinic, University Hospitals of Cleveland, Metro-Health Medical Center and the Cleveland VAMC. These collaborations resulted in publication of about 70 peer-reviewed scientific articles. Her volunteer experience is largely affiliated with her religion. Bernadette has been an active member of her parish, St. Paschal Baylon Catholic Church, for over two decades. She is currently a member of the Liturgical Planning Committee. Additionally, she is an Executive Board Member of the Northeast Ohio Associates of the Blessed Sacrament community and is a former member of the Life in the Eucharist team. Bernadette is an ex-officio executive board volunteer member of Birthright Lake, Inc.

Sheila Evensen

Sheila's favorite memories at CWRU School of Medicine aren't moments but rather are for the people for whom she has had the privilege to work with throughout the years. Each regime at MED and across campus has been paramount. The people Sheila has worked with over the years make all her memories at CWRU her favorites! Some of her accomplishments include increasing numbers of alumni events, planning reunions and watching how much everyone connects with our students! Additionally, sharing best practices so everyone succeeds. She truly feels like working at the CWRU School of Medicine has been an amazing experience, and she looks forward to

continuing until retirement. Sheila has been a member of the Staff Advisory Council and volunteered for the Mitochondrial Foundation, Pals in Motion and Girl Scouts of America.

Peggy L R Harris

For Peggy, the people that she has had the opportunity to work with and the dear friends that she has made along the way are her favorite memories of her tenure. Her proudest accomplishments are the number of scientific projects to which she has contributed and the students she has mentored. Peggy's volunteer experience revolves around the interests of her children and their extracurricular activities.

Lakshmi Kasturi

Lakshmi's favorite memory has been the lunchtime walks about Wade Oval in the spring. Lakshmi's proudest accomplishments include noninvasive colon cancer screenings and working on drug development. Additionally, Lakshmi volunteers within the Indian Community.

Jennifer K. Nieves

Jennifer felt the sense of truly being a part of CWRU when the Dittrick Medical History Center became a department within the College of Arts and Sciences in 1997. Researching and installing large exhibits about the history of medicine in Cleveland and studying for the certified archivist exam during the pandemic and passing the test in 2020 are her proudest achievements. In her free time, Jennifer is a member of the Cleveland Archival Roundtable. She is also the secretary/treasurer of the Medical Museums Assn. and president of LAMPHHS, an international archives, library and museum organization.

Jay A. Ruffner

Jay's favorite memory has been meeting and working with several talented and dedicated students, faculty and administrators. He worked on the development of systemic efficiencies and enhancements to the student records systems at the CWRU School of

Law. Jay has served as a board member and treasurer of the National Network of Law School Officers, a national professional development and networking organization founded over 70 years ago by one of his predecessors from the CWRU School of Law.

25 YEAR HONOREES

Rimas Biliunas

Rimas has enjoyed working with the engineering faculty's IT needs to enable their research. His proudest accomplishment was working with his team to build and launch the MyApps virtual desktop and application delivery platform. Over the years, Rimas has volunteered his time at commencement.

Martina Croft

Martina's favorite memories include working with amazing people to provide students with unlimited programs and events from orientation to graduation, as well as collaborating with different departments as a business manager. Her role has been challenging, but a wonderful experience. Martina's proudest accomplishment has been the opportunity to grow as a professional. From her very first day until now, she has had many opportunities to improve her skills. She has also had supervisors who have been very supportive of her growth. Currently, Martina is a part of Alianza Latina/Latin Alliance where they plan and provide programs for the Latinx/Hispanic community. In the Cleveland area, she is an active member of a church where she serves as a treasurer and children's ministry assistant. Lastly, she is an active volunteer for many events at her daughter's school.

Lori Duesler

For Lori, all the wonderful people she has met and the friends that she has made over the years are her favorite memories. Lori has been employed at the university for 25 years, which is

her proudest achievement. In her free time, Lori volunteers within the community she lives in.

Katherine Renee Evans

Katherine's favorite memory is meeting and working alongside all the great folks that make up the CWRU family! Her proudest accomplishment was helping to ensure the BioEnterprise Incubator continues to be a great success.

Vanessa Flenoy

Vanessa is fortunate to have been able to meet different people of different nationalities. Her favorite memories were meeting LeVar Burton and attending different seminars, events and exhibits on campus. Vanessa's proudest accomplishment was receiving the longevity award for her service and being recognized for her work at TVUC by her department. In the past, Vanessa volunteered at a Juneteenth event for CWRU.

Nivo Hanson

Nivo's favorite memory has been the meaningful relationships she has built with faculty and colleagues. She especially cherishes her department's annual holiday lunch gatherings. Her proudest accomplishment is playing a role in the success of students who have gone on to become physicians. Contributing to their journey, even in a small way over the years, has been incredibly rewarding for Nivo. She has had a wonderful experience volunteering and packing school supplies for kids alongside other Case employees. It was a great opportunity to connect with people outside the institution.

Sarah Ialacci

A fond memory for Sarah, from her time at the university, was traveling to Washington D.C. to study, attend meetings and learn about research. Sarah's proudest achievement has been helping to secure the RECOVER COVID research grant under Dr. Grace McComsey, which studies long-haul COVID symptoms. Sarah also helps to lead a monthly Lunch and Learn session with junior grant managers to review topics

pertinent to their work. Lastly, she is also the treasurer for the Our Lady of Angels Athletic Association which supports youth sports in Cleveland.

Lisa Kouns

Lisa's favorite memory is being nominated for the Staff Advisory Council by her peers. She served on the Staff Recognition Committee from 2009 - 2018. Her favorite aspects of the committee were selecting the winners for the President's Award for Distinguished Service and volunteering at Party on the Quad. Working her way up in the university, starting in the Accounts Payable office to her current position as a Student Receivables Specialist in the Student Financial Services Office, has been Lisa's proudest accomplishment. She handles all sponsor or third-party billing for students. In her free time, Lisa enjoys helping causes that are close to her heart, such as charity walks and fundraisers for cancer research, The Cleveland Heart Association, and Alzheimer's research.

Loretta Laffitte-Griffin

During her tenure here, Loretta has created several great memories. While interning at the Social Justice Institute (SJI), she understood and embraced the vision and commitment of the SJI and worked towards making their events and programs a success. Loretta was an active participant in the Think Tank; Race, Food and Justice Conference; East Cleveland Voicing and Action Project: Power of Testimony; People in Action; and the U.N. World Day of Social Justice - Human Trafficking. She was also able to meet two of her heroes: Angela Davis and Maya Angelou. Earning her Bachelor of Arts in Sociology and her Master of Science in Social Administration with a concentration in Community Practice for Social Change (Social Work) have been Loretta's proudest achievements. Loretta is part of many different organizations, including AKD - National Sociology Honor Society, CWRU Alumni Association and the Mandel School of Applied Social Science - BSA National Association of Social Workers (NASW). In her free time, she volunteers at numerous places, including CWRU Gospel fest, Case

Community Day and the Congressional Black Caucus Stokes Scholars Reception.

Lorraine Nelson

Lorraine's favorite memory during her time at CWRU includes being involved with international travel. Specifically, choosing an itinerary, visiting the proposed location of the tour to meet with in-country guides, being a trip leader and sharing the experience with a group of local travelers. Her proudest accomplishment is sharing the resources of the university with the greater Cleveland community by offering high-quality lifelong learning programs and using faculty for our Senior Scholars program. One of Lorraine's passions is helping with the annual Association for Continuing Education (ACE) / CWRU book sale; she has been involved with this event for over 30 years.

Jennifer Oconnor-Neskey

Spring on campus - 25 years and it's still Jennifer's favorite memory each year. She loves seeing all the trees budding and flowers starting to bloom. Her proudest moment was when they launched the Leadership Deep Dive Program. It was (and still is) such a privilege to work with her amazing WSOM faculty team and colleagues.

Carol Samuels

One of Carol's favorite memories was finding out that her first supervisor, Dr. Danny Sawyer, was an ordained minister. She feels fortunate that both Dr. Sawyer and her current supervisor, Dr. Andres Pinto, foster a great working environment. Carol has also met some wonderful people who are like family to her. Some of Carol's proudest accomplishments include successfully coordinating a few large-scale events. She took on the additional responsibility of serving as the Graduate Studies Coordinator for the School of Dental Medicine for a year. She consistently surpassed

expectations while maintaining a positive and supportive environment. Over the years, Carol has volunteered at the Case for Community Days and several commencements. In the Cleveland community, she volunteers at HOPE Kitchen, which provides hot meals for people in need.

Melody Stewart

Melody enjoys helping and serving the patients that visit the Dental Clinic. In her free time, Melody is a full-time grandma which keeps her very busy.

Charles Thomas

Charles enjoys the friendly atmosphere on campus. His proudest achievements include being published over 40 times.

Sandy Torres

Sandy's favorite memory is the fall time on campus when students return. There is renewed energy and excitement in the air. She is proud of her contributions to the scientific papers published by her lab. In her free time, Sandy has volunteered for the Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure for the past several years.

Laura Travis

Laura has enjoyed working with great people and going out to explore the campus at lunchtime during her time at CWRU. Laura's proudest accomplishment has been working on the Dittrick Museum exhibits and photographing thousands of artifacts. Laura was a member of the Campus Emergency Response Team (CERT) from its inception and through the pandemic. She also volunteered at many Case for Community days.

Tammy Wallace

Tammy has had the honor of meeting and working with some of the most amazing people. She is grateful to have made a few lifelong friends during her 25 years at Case. One of her

proudest accomplishments is being part of the Case Comprehensive Cancer Center team and helping to submit the Cancer Center renewal grant. Tammy was a member of the Staff Advisory Council and has also volunteered to help with commencement. Lastly, she volunteered to be on the cheer team for VeloSano.

Carolyn Washick

Carolyn enjoys the opportunity to collaborate with talented and inspiring individuals to develop innovative programs that support and empower employees across the campus. Her proudest accomplishment is her continuous growth as a Human Resources professional, embracing learning, development, and the integration of technology—such as Artificial Intelligence—to enhance her role. Beyond her career, Carolyn has dedicated time to volunteering, from assisting at school events to cooking and serving meals for those in need.

Michael Whitted

Michael has enjoyed helping others throughout his time at CWRU. His proudest accomplishment was becoming a supervisor.

10 YEAR HONOREES

Natalia Aladyshkina

Some of Natalia's favorite memories include having a lot of new experiences, making new friends and working towards another degree - her MBA for which she has $\frac{3}{4}$ of the way completed (that was a dream goal for a non-native speaker). She is grateful for the opportunity to earn her MBA. Her proudest accomplishment has been going from Research Assistant II to Research Assistant IV and Lab Manager. When she is free, Natalia volunteers at the Cleveland Cultural Gardens. She is a board member and treasurer of the Russian Cultural Garden.

Michelle Arendt

Michelle's favorite memory was returning to the office, following the fully-remote period during COVID, to find flowers with a "Welcome Back" sign. She realized at that moment she was really grateful to be back on campus among the wonderful CWRU community. Michelle's proudest achievement was forming partnerships with CWRU members outside of her office so that they knew they could come to her directly to help solve issues they were facing. Michelle has served on several hiring and search committees and has taken part in campus efforts to provide gifts to children during the holidays and clothes for Dress for Success. Outside of CWRU, she is active with Great Lakes Theater, a non-profit regional theater, and at her daughter's school.

Elizabeth Bober

Elizabeth's responsibilities are diverse, but her primary focus is on assessing library activities, supporting the strategic plan for Kelvin Smith Library and ensuring that the library's value and impact are effectively communicated to stakeholders.

Pat Brandt

Throughout her time at CWRU, Pat has enjoyed working with her colleagues and making acquaintances through project implementation. Pat's proudest accomplishment has been fostering great relationships with colleagues and study participants. Currently, Pat is working on making her and her neighbors' voices heard in the unsettling political climate with calls, letters and marches. She has worked with Hospice of the Western Reserve in the past and with meal distribution for the Geauga County Department on Aging.

Gerri Collier

One of Gerri's favorite memories at the university is the field trip she took to Rid-All. Gerri was amazed at how they transformed an empty, neglected piece of land in the Kinsman area into an urban farm. After that, she and the group went to Edwin's for lunch and enjoyed some

ice cream. She spent several years striving for acceptance into the Women Staff Leadership Development Institute (WSLDI). Finally, Gerri was accepted, completed the year-long course and earned her certificate. That was her proudest accomplishment. Gerri has volunteered or is currently involved with the following organizations: Toastmasters, Contact Tracing, Fall Fest, Late Night Breakfast, Garlic Festival, D360, Midtown Cleveland and Day of Giving.

Robb Combs

Robb's favorite memory has been working with and learning from his supervisor, David Wright. His proudest accomplishments were winning Staff Member of the Year, being awarded the Community Spotlight Award, and winning Employee of the Month. Outside of the university, Robb is the CEO of Elite Youth Enrollment, a certified 501(c)3 nonprofit that serves the community by providing mentorship, job resources and life skills training.

Gail Daniels

Gail's favorite memory was being able to witness the transformation of students from freshman to graduation and entering the next phase of their life's journey. She is proud that she was able to have a positive impact and provide a level of support to some of the students, whether it was by lending a listening ear or giving words of encouragement. In her spare time, Gail volunteered at Hathaway Brown School and the Food Bank at the City Mission in Cleveland.

Darlana Dillard

For Darlena, it's hard for her to pinpoint an all-time favorite work memory as she has always been lucky in the colleague department. Darlena has made lifelong friends at work and shared too many laughs to count. While that experience is hard to sum up in one specific memory, all her favorites have her colleagues as a common thread, so her favorite memory is more like a favorite life asset. A few of Darlena's proudest accomplishments over her tenure were being a 2020 graduate

of the 2020 WSLDI cohort and thereafter becoming a board member for WSLDI, playing a major part in the continuance of the program. Her second proudest moment was being able to take part in the tuition reimbursement benefit to further her education; with the help of this benefit, she will have earned her BAA in Paralegals Studies in 2026. As part of the CWRU community, Darlena belongs to the Art Forward Group which connects youth at the Cuyahoga County Juvenile Detention Center. They work on creative art projects monthly. In 2024, she also started her own grassroots non-profit organization where the mission is to improve the quality of life for residents of Cleveland by addressing critical needs, promoting sustainable practices and strengthening community bonds.

Sarada Fuzzell

Sarada has had many great memories while working at CWRU, but what sticks out the most is how Dr. Haines's lab supported each other during the pandemic. It was moving because she had never been in such a supportive work environment before. Her proudest accomplishments are the connections she has made and the life lessons she has learned from their research participants.

Rajesh Gupta

Rajesh's favorite memory includes working with aspiring students to become doctors/researchers. His proudest achievements are working on many difficult studies/projects, getting them successfully completed and seeing them transformed into bigger/better studies/projects. When Rajesh has time, he volunteers at local food banks.

Catrina M Hutchins

One of Catrina's favorite memories is connecting with [U]Tech staff outside of the office on their outings. The proudest moments for Catrina were completing cost-saving projects and seeing the proud looks on leadership's faces. She recently volunteered at the 2025 Black Business Expo.

Leslie S. Johnson

Leslie has too many memories to name just one favorite memory. Leslie is proud to be a part of the CSE Team 1. She lives in Akron, so she volunteers at her church there. Leslie is a children's ministry teacher.

Joy Knight

Joy loves the Case Wellness series, Walktober, nutrition classes, and Zoom fitness classes. She also enjoys the Employee Benefit Fair and holiday brunch. Joy's proudest accomplishment is helping increase awareness about breast cancer risk and educating patients about breast cancer prevention. She loves working as a team through interdisciplinary collaboration.

Ray Krajci

Ray's favorite memory was proposing to his wife in front of Tomlinson Hall on the spot where they first met at undergraduate orientation. Ray's proudest accomplishment was that for one exhilarating, challenging semester he was simultaneously a student, staff and faculty member. Ray has served on the Staff Advisory Council since 2020.

Todd Kramer

For Todd, working with his father to create the Robin Kramer Volunteer Award for staff was his favorite memory. Todd's greatest achievement was redesigning the meal plan to allow students greater flexibility and online accessibility while allowing the vendors greater distributed logistical support, increasing participation, satisfaction and revenue.

Kristi Lehmer

Kristi's favorite memory while working at CWRU has been getting to know so many great people, co-workers and students. It was all about relationships and seeing students graduate. Her proudest accomplishment has been helping nurses pursue their academic goals and then being a part of the graduation and pinning ceremonies - as a

member of the Pinning and Commencement Team. Additionally, she is a Title IV advisor.

Ewa Malicki

Every year, Ewa looks forward to the commencement ceremonies, where she witnesses the culmination of years of hard work and dedication from the students. The sense of pride and joy is truly contagious, especially as Ewa sees the smiles on the faces of graduates and their families. It's a moment of celebration, not only for the students but also for those who have supported them along the way. It's a privilege to be part of such a milestone in the students' lives. Her proudest accomplishment is consistently supporting students and contributing to their success. Seeing them achieve their goals, knowing she played a part in their journey, is incredibly fulfilling. Providing the best service she can to help them thrive remains Ewa's ongoing goal and commitment. Ewa has been actively involved with the CSE Working Groups, where they focus on improving processes related to purchasing, reimbursements, and hiring new employees. She had the privilege of serving on the CSE Spring Awards Selection Committee. In recent years, due to staffing shortages in her department, she has been balancing two roles while also training new hires.

Margaret V. Meek

Margaret's favorite memory is working in a department where she can count on her co-workers for assistance when needed. Her proudest accomplishment, after spending many years in the banking industry, is learning a different type of business.

Elizabeth Meinke

Working with great people at CWRU makes great memories for Elizabeth. Working as a librarian in higher education has provided her with invaluable professional experiences, both worldwide and in Cleveland. The surprise of getting a campus-wide week off during the RNC in 2016 was a fun memory. As Kelvin Smith Library's Exhibitions and Programming Librarian, Elizabeth is proud to have fostered professionally produced exhibits and programs, including activities like

book displays and crafting events. These forms of outreach are as critical as any other library function or service. Elizabeth has served on a few CWRU committees. Currently, she serves the CWRU Librarians as a chair on the Librarian Assembly. During the pandemic, she served on a university-wide digital accessibility taskforce. Elizabeth has done extensive committee work within library and arts professional organizations. Locally, she has juried art exhibitions.

Marvin Miller

Marvin's favorite memory was how he was able to change his shift from 3:00pm - 11:00pm - when he first started at the university - to 6:00am - 2:00pm. His proudest accomplishment is that he is still working at CWRU after 10 years of service.

Stephanie Nelson

Stephanie has been able to learn and improve throughout her milestone career at CWRU. In her spare time, Stephanie helps her community stay healthy at NuLife Fitness Camp.

George O'Connell

George's favorite memory has been working with colleagues and students over the years. His proudest accomplishment was developing the University Student Code of Conduct. Another accomplishment was helping the university manage the pandemic and overseeing student testing and vaccine compliance. George volunteers his time at the mobile food pantry.

Natalia (Buczkowski) Olley

Natalia's favorite memories continue because she gets to work for a great PI and with a wonderful team! Her proudest accomplishment is working with summer students and making such a big impact that one of the students ended up joining the lab! Natalia really enjoys the wellness walking programs because she and her coworkers can have walking breaks together.

Shaina Pearlman

Shaina's favorite memory has been seeing the campus and community positively transform throughout the years. Her proudest accomplishment was going from unpaid intern to Lead Digital Video Post-Production Specialist. Outside of the university, Shaina fosters cats through Lucky Paws Animal Rescue.

Eboni Porter

Eboni's favorite memory includes meeting so many exceptional students, faculty and staff during her time at CWRU. Developing and leading an amazing team of hardworking, skilled individuals who are dedicated to helping students with disabilities have equal access on campus has been her proudest achievement.

Maureen E. Purcell

Each year, Maureen's team fosters a sense of community and connection by bringing together medical school faculty, staff, students, family and friends to celebrate the graduates' achievements during the commencement ceremony. She is proud to be a leader in creating and implementing engagement strategies, managing donor relationships and overseeing volunteer efforts to secure resources to advance the School of Medicine's mission and development goals. In her free time, Maureen is a member of WSLDI, Garden Club, and is a parent volunteer at St. Bernadette.

Kevin Pye

Kevin's favorite memory was removing snow on graduation day. His proudest accomplishment was during the Lot 1 flood when a group of grounds workers, Kevin included, needed to come in to help locate and clear drains that were clogged due to the flooding down Cedar Hill. In the past, he has done some work for the Cleveland Sight Center.

David Retzer

David has had the opportunity to work with so many interesting staff and students while witnessing amazing events on campus. He has

helped shape the standards at the Tinkham Veale University Center and the box office at the Maltz Performing Arts Center and watched them evolve into awesome venues. Additionally, David has worked every commencement and has seen how wonderful it is for the families to celebrate their students' accomplishments. David serves on the Staff Advisory Council and the Community Service Committee at CWRU. Lastly, he has volunteered for many years on the Cudell Improvement Board of Directors and as President of the Eastman Condominium Association.

Tanya D. Smith

Tanya's favorite memories have been her department's Home for the Holidays celebrations. Her proudest accomplishment was obtaining her master's degree. Tanya is a part of the Administrative Professionals Network, American Sign Language Club and Mandel School's Black Student Association.

Sunah Song

Sunah's favorite memory has been working with great team members over the years. Completing and receiving her Ph.D. was Sunah's proudest accomplishment.

Anna Thornton Matos

The best thing about working for CWRU is the relationships Anna has made with some very smart and caring co-workers. She is most proud of the community that she has engaged over the course of the past ten years to bolster a positive image of the university in the Greater Cleveland community.

Ernie Timbs

Among so many positive interactions with colleagues and friends, no single moment stands out for Ernie. It is a pleasure every day to be surrounded by such professional and kind people! His proudest achievement has been supporting the development enterprise at the School of Medicine and beyond and helping to raise millions of dollars. Also, hiring Annie Howell, a truly indispensable member of Ernie's

team! In his free time, Ernie volunteers with the Hudson Baseball Association and Hudson Community Education and Recreation as a volunteer coach and administrator.

Melissa Van

Melissa's favorite memories involve working with others to develop improvements to the way her team works. Her proudest accomplishment was when she inspired someone to stretch themselves career-wise.

Steven Webster

Steven got spectacularly lost on a visit to the Forbidden City in Beijing and had to be "rescued" by a local grad student, which has been his favorite memory. His proudest achievement was when a student thanked him for "keeping it real" when she graduated. Steven is an active hiker with the Cleveland Hiking Club.

Preston Wilkins

Preston's favorite memory over the years was meeting a lot of nice people on campus. He is proud to have worked at the university for 10 years.

Chamois Williams

The best memories Chamois has had are those shared with colleagues who take great pride in the work they are doing and get to celebrate successes and commiserate in failed attempts. She is particularly fond of Homecoming 2017, sitting on the floor of the Alumni Center late Saturday night, rolling with laughter as they told the wildest stories that they had been part of. Her proudest accomplishments include helping alumni make a meaningful impact connected to their CWRU experiences, from helping establish alumni chapters in China to coordinating a university-wide symposium. Chamois enjoys the positivity of those interactions, and is proud that her three kids, whom she has had during her tenure here, are seeing her at her best. Chamois is the VP of Foundation, Delta Gamma Cleveland East Alumnae Chapter. In her spare time, she volunteers at the Cleveland

Sight Center. Lastly, Chamois is a member of the Association of Fundraising Professionals.

Erin Zaletel

Erin's proudest accomplishment is to have worked at the university for 10 years and to have reached this career milestone.

The Staff Service Awards Ceremony
is an official, annual university event to honor
the staff members whose
long-standing contributions
have actively helped to advance the university's
mission for one or more decades, and in many
cases, more than three decades.

While this program occurs once a year, every
day provides an opportunity to express to one
another an appreciation for the talented and
dedicated staff members who help make
Case Western Reserve University
a truly great place to work.

On behalf of the
Department of Human Resources,
we express our deepest gratitude for your
many years of dedicated and selfless service,
and wish you continued success and happiness
throughout your career with the university.