

U.S. Attorney's Report to the District
Recognizing the Dedication of Our Employees

Federal employees generally, and support staff in federal offices in particular, are given scant respect in the media and in public discourse, particularly during election years. The caricatures of federal workers that are frequently put forth on the campaign trail bear little resemblance to the dedicated professionals I have worked with for years in this office.

The support staff in this office – legal assistants and paralegals, IT staff and administrators – are as dedicated to our mission as are the attorneys who appear in court. They frequently work long hours and on weekends, and they demonstrate tremendous teamwork, often in high-pressure situations just before trial, or in the late hours before the filing of a key legal brief. The importance of their work to the success of our mission is not recognized often enough.

Several years ago, after the sudden loss of a beloved attorney in our Fresno office, Deanna Martinez, we created the Deanna Martinez Award. It is presented annually to the employee in the Fresno office who exemplifies the attributes that made Deanna such an affirmative force in that office – a positive attitude, a willingness to help others, concern for co-workers, and dedication to our mission. Although the award is named for an attorney, and all employees are eligible, every winner to date has been a member of the support staff. In 2011, the award went to Eva Carrizales and Donna McCloskey, veteran legal assistants. In 2012, the winner was Mary Paggett, our administrative services specialist. In 2013, the award was presented to Joni Jones, a civil division legal assistant in Fresno. The 2014 winner was legal assistant Michelle Holliday. Last month I handed a plaque to this year's winner, Susan Sok, a hard-working legal assistant who started in the office in 2008 as a clerk and receptionist before being promoted to legal assistant.

We thought the employees of our Sacramento office should also have an opportunity to be recognized for outstanding teamwork that contributes to the mission of the office. This month we announced the inauguration of the Samantha Spangler award, named after a 20-year veteran of the office who died in 2014. Samantha loved the office and loved her colleagues. In addition to being a capable prosecutor who jumped in to help in all types of cases, she devoted tremendous energy and her own time to office holiday parties, rafting trips, Halloween events, and other group activities. In April we will present a plaque to a Sacramento office employee who reflects Samantha's spirit of helpfulness, humor, and hard work. There is a very good chance that the first winner of the Spangler Award, like all the winners of the Martinez Award to date, will be a member of the support staff.

If you would like to communicate with our office, contact the main number in Sacramento, or submit a suggestion by clicking on the button below. Thank you.

United States Attorney

Benjamin B. Wagner