

2019 Harvard Heroes Citations
Delivered by President Lawrence S. Bacow
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Harvard Planning Office

Mark Verkennis, some heroes favor secret lairs. Others prefer historical commission meetings and zoning hearings. With stealth powers of regulatory knowledge, you help University teams conquer countless capital projects across campus. And your allegiance to service and sustainability never wane, even if it means hand sorting trash for a waste audit. Like Harvard's own caped crusader, you work behind the scenes and beyond our gates to make our campus a brighter place.

Alumni Affairs and Development

Virginia Brooks, helping secure a largely unrestricted, anonymous, \$100 million gift to the University might be reason enough to consider you a hero. But you are also a pro with prospects, a super steward of University resources, and a trusted confidante and mentor to many. In the world of capital gifts, you're one in a million!

Paul Dzus, Technology Operations Manager, you're often greeted with a sigh of relief because everyone who encounters you knows they're in great hands. Whether you're crawling on hands and knees to fix equipment, tending to glitchy software or revolutionizing online check-ins during Alumni Reunion weekend, you apply tech talents that are second to none. When devices need debugging, your teams know they'd better call Paul.

Harvard Business School

Ricardo Aviles, colleagues say your first-class service is something to write home about. In addition to delivering daily mail with a smile, you keep faculty support specialists posted on campus events, take time to welcome new staff, and get to know your route so mail always arrives correctly, even when staff and offices shift around. Move over, Amazon Prime, Ricardo delivers the goods at Rock Center.

Jill H. Fadule, crafting the new MS/MBA program from scratch required building a partnership with SEAS and troubleshooting all the groundbreaking changes that come with such an effort. Luckily for your team, where there's a Jill there's a way. From IT and policy challenges to schedule conflicts and grading issues, you addressed myriad issues to create an outstanding program that exemplifies what we can accomplish as One Harvard.

Steve O'Donnell, when managing more than \$25 million in research-related budgets and an administrative budget to boot, there are sure to be tough talks along the way. You're known for communicating sensitive funding issues with both kindness and candor, leaving even disappointed

colleagues feeling heard. Your nominators say this unique skill, paired with 35 years of dedication to Harvard's mission, means you're always on the money.

Harvard Art Museums

Erin Northington, you're a friendly docent who has community building down to a fine art, drawing people together for daring projects, mentoring a student advisory board and greeting growing crowds at the now-iconic Student Late Night. To ensure that learning from difference is a participatory art, you champion efforts to make the Harvard art experience more diverse and accessible. You're a portrait of inclusive excellence.

LASPAU

Aline de Araujo Santos, a movie montage of your magnificence at LASPAU would include scenes of you logging into the Salesforce site; teaching yourself about database design, workflows, and automated processes; and encouraging teams to adopt the new platform. Then some close-ups of picture-perfect reports that fix longtime headaches and, finally, pans of your applauding colleagues. Now that's the way to steal the show!

Harvard Law School

Melissa Bergsten, as Admissions and Financial Aid Administrator, you kept your cool through an especially complicated and time-intensive application season, leading your team to record-setting finishes with patience and perseverance despite absences and staffing struggles. Colleagues call you a magician and a miracle worker with the ability to put out fires figuratively—and, one time, literally. LLM stands not only for Master of Laws, but also “lionhearted and laudable Melissa”.

Sheryl Dickey, you're a sought-after cross-team collaborator from the Office of Clinical and Pro Bono Programs, consulting on everything from visa issues for international JD students to an online ethics tutorial for LLM students. Colleagues call you the epitome of excellence and admire your endless energy and commitment to volunteering your time outside of work—for graduation, the green team or projects for HLS in the Community. It's clear you're a pro at pro bono.

Campus Services

Thomas Becker, leading a 10-person finance and administration team that provides accounting support to a dozen Campus Services business units is already a full charge. When unusual turnover, changes in leadership, and staffing shortages required you to fill in the gaps, it became a test of endurance that you passed with flying colors. Like another famous Tom B., you're a team player and inspiring leader who can run the ball yourself when needed.

Paula O'Callahan, Catering Sales Associate at Crimson Catering, you're the cream of the crop. From small coffee breaks to elegant Annenberg dinners, you help clients plan their best events.

You're willing to lend a hand in the kitchen and assist with event setup, even when you have bigger fish to fry. Handling myriad menus, shifting special requests, and satisfying countless clients is a tall order. But you make it look easy as pie.

Ana Soares, whether you're tackling emergency overnight cleanups or erasing the traces of a thousand prospective students on campus tours, you make the world tidier each day. You leave such a lasting impression that Radcliffe Fellows are even known to keep in touch with you long after they've left your care. Your attention to detail truly transforms lives.

Peter Underhill, holy smokes, you've been busy! In just a year as Supervisor of Fire Safety Services, you've streamlined the testing and inspection process for fire alarms, suppression systems, and emergency generators across campus. You've also worked to empower and encourage your busy crew and to improve communication with customers. Colleagues and clients across the University are immensely grateful for your responsiveness and focus on safety first. There's no match for your excellence.

George Yeomelakis, an associate director of Parking Facilities on our spot-scarce campus might be forgiven for being ornery or harried from time to time. But your reserve of kindness and patience is so deep that you once even took the time to help someone practice—over and over—how to enter and exit a notoriously vexing campus garage. This kind of customer service deserves a citation, and colleagues and clients alike validate the claim that you take goodwill to the next level!

Harvard John A. Paulson School of Engineering and Applied Sciences

Brandon Tilghman, managing academic appointments at SEAS means you're often orienting new scholars and researchers to our campus. But you've reached far beyond basic introductions to create innovative, inclusive ways for underrepresented members of the community to meet and network. By engineering new networks and social connections, you've sparked a SEAS change.

Harvard Medical School

Mirta Guerrero Tejada, you might be tasked with keeping the nation's oldest medical school residence looking sharp each day, but many in Vanderbilt Hall also know you're the honorary house mother. You greet students as you work, sending some off to class with warm hugs that ease homesickness and hectic weeks. With dedication and thoughtfulness, you have made a hall a home.

Margaret Ivins, you masterfully manage academic affairs for the Wyss Institute. Aside from your reputation as an unrelenting answer-finder, your dedication to the people of Wyss is unparalleled—whether that means organizing team-building events and orientations, or personally helping a graduate student navigate the travel ban. In a place of bioinspired technology, you showcase humanity.

Laurie O'Connor, when staff and leadership transitions landed squarely in the middle of accreditation season at the HMS Office for Faculty Affairs, your flexible, forward-thinking approach was just what the doctor ordered. By voluntarily taking on two roles, you kept things running smoothly for your team and the school's 12,000 faculty members. Managing phone lines, archiving

paper and e-documents, coordinating events—for many an administrative ailment, Laurie is just what the doctor ordered.

Evan Sanders, like any great musician, you know the power of improvisation. Your initiative and relentless enthusiasm have hit all the right notes on upgrading everything from virtual teaching tools to curriculum assessments for medical education. You keep the beat as a level-headed mentor while embracing organizational and technological change—and encouraging others to jam with you. Bravo!

Deborah Corwin Scott, in two short years, you've rebooted HMS IT to break down silos and support the school's biomedical education and research. You've reconfigured human network protocols to encourage staff feedback, established a gateway for a more diverse team, and created more access points for valuable partnerships across departments. Always aiming for collaboration and empowering your team, your leadership has been the real-life equivalent of the F5 key—refreshing.

Rainelle Walker White. As we heard a few minutes ago, when others say, “We can only do so much,” you say, “There is so much we can do.” Under your leadership, the Family Van does plenty, coordinating more than 3,200 free health screenings, referrals, and workshops each year. With passion and kind counsel, you oversee staff, mentor students, and help community members in underserved Boston neighborhoods feel welcome. Many people are grateful for your ability to reduce health disparities, one smile at a time.

Mary Walsh, in support of HMS faculty investigating research misconduct, you comb through endless rows of data during forensic analysis of research records. You've also helped develop a tool to catch image similarities and an outreach program to head off research misconduct. Colleagues consider you an international leader in research integrity and the embodiment of *veritas*. As Chief Scientific Investigator, you're Harvard's own CSI.

Harvard School of Dental Medicine

Mary E. Anderson, word of mouth is you're an HR superstar for the School of Dental Medicine. Whether you are guiding new hires through paperwork and relocation needs, reviewing records for the Massachusetts Equal Pay Act, or working on an accessible electronic storage system for HR records, you drill down to the root of the issue to provide incomparable service. Your admirers say you deserve more than a little plaque for your good deeds—I guess a crown will do!

Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health

Emily Coles, your impressive outreach efforts increased fellowship applications to the Takemi Program in International Health six-fold in your first year—and sixteen-fold in your second year. When fellows new to Harvard and to the United States arrive, you share traditions such as Thanksgiving feasts and Yankee Swaps. Colleagues say your creativity and compassion have built a convivial community where scholars thrive. They wouldn't trade it for the world.

Hilary Farmer, you cook up kinship for the Department of Nutrition by enriching outreach for weekly seminars and fortifying the department newsletter with inclusive profiles and research chronicles. That, along with coordinating reviews for faculty and researcher appointments, means you often have a lot on your plate. Fortunately, your creativity and initiative far exceed the recommended daily allowance.

Jennifer Ford, as Research Nurse Manager for the EARTH Study, you've fostered a work environment where everyone feels valued. You log samples alongside research assistants, advocate for colleagues' inclusion on new projects, and encourage everyone's professional development. Your leadership for collective efforts—and collective credit—have created a positive environment. Many people are grateful that you go to the ends of the EARTH to support them.

Brian Frederick, for the labs of Genetics and Complex Diseases, you're a coach, starter, and pinch hitter all in one. Whether it's fielding administrative tasks for a colleague on leave, finding space for labs during construction, filling a vacancy to manage a 26-person lab, or quickly coordinating alternate storage after a cold room malfunction, you step up to the plate to ensure those around you can always do their best work. You truly elevate the meaning of being a team player.

Financial Administration

Jeanine Toler, financial analyst supreme, you spotted a loan operations system issue across eye-crossing spreadsheets, and your good work helped prevent larger issues at Harvard—and four other institutions as well! But you're also known for doing MC Hammer dance moves, complete with parachute pants, to keep your colleagues laughing through busy days and tough transitions. Mastering the art of keeping it light while doing it right is why you're "2 Legit 2 Quit."

Helen Zdybowicz, you know all the ways Harvard leaves its footprint on the planet—who better to help us tiptoe our way to a greener future? As a Senior Sourcing Consultant, you sow our sustainability aims into vendor RFIs, RFPs and contract renewals. And you proactively point buyers to eco-friendly, healthier options for everything from furniture and food service vendors, to office and lab supplies. Your always-renewable energy makes us green with envy.

Harvard Kennedy School

Ian Dalley, your surname's clearly a misnomer, because you waste no time dilly-dallying. While taking on a new role as Research Fellow Coordinator, you swiftly stepped in for a short-staffed HR office and conducted training for new staff, juggling multiple priorities with minimum disruptions. In your own job, you successfully piloted a new research fellow nomination and appointment process during one of the busiest hiring times of the year. You're a pro at making short work of tall orders.

Myrish Cadapan Antonio, in overseeing programs at the Center for Public Leadership, you've created opportunities for students to use their leadership training in the field to address critical issues across the country. You've taught and mentored Mason Fellows. And, as a Harvard Administrative Fellow, you've helped develop University training for cultural competency. The Kennedy School implores us to ask what we can do. In your case, it's easier to ask: What can't she do?

Faculty of Arts and Sciences

Odette Binder, when preparations for the W.E.B. DuBois sesquicentennial symposium made colleagues feel like they were “learning how to swim in a hurricane,” she brought everyone safely back to shore. Whether greeting guests and speakers, arranging conferences and colloquia, or adjusting a projector before a keynote presentation, she is the calm in the eye of the storm.

Gary Cormier, you collaborate with FAS faculty on innovative programs, mentor first-year students, and leverage your vast network to assist staff seeking their next professional challenge. You’ve led hundreds of colleagues through discussions of workplace civility, unconscious bias, and becoming an active bystander. For your community building and contagious positivity, your admirers proclaim that “Gary is legendary!”

Sarah Elwell, your guidance helped build and grow the Division of Science’s core facilities service centers from the ground up to provide spectrometry, sequencing, and other technologies that facilitate groundbreaking research. And you managed this multiyear effort while creating supportive and motivating work environments for your colleagues. Those are clearly some breakthrough results!

Alex Ferguson, as Manager of Equipment Operations for Harvard Athletics, you oversee the apparel and gear for 1,200 student athletes, seven days a week—loads and loads of laundry! You’re a critical member of every Crimson team, building connections with athletes and suppliers to help ensure performance, player safety, and cost-effective purchasing. Harvard gains victory day after day because of your efforts.

A. Maryorie Grande, you move mountains and tend to unexpected eruptions in the Department of Earth and Planetary Sciences, responding to queries about lab alarms and suspected meteorites with extraordinary calm and, often, a piece of candy. With nearly 40 years of University knowledge and an openhearted approach, you are the bedrock of EPS—and a rare gem among University staff.

Nancy Hegarty, for scientists in Molecular and Cellular Biology who depend on government and private agency funding, you’ve been a mighty mitochondrion, turning more than 1,000 submitted proposals into \$25 million in research grants each year. Your wisdom and sense of humor keep colleagues and students steady through post-award administration and fellowship submissions. The grant application process can be a stressful ordeal, but—inspired by any good zygote—you divide tasks and multiply effectiveness with gusto.

Peggy Herlihy, in your 35 years of stellar work as the Astronomy Department Administrator, you’ve become well known among generations of students as problem-solver and confidante, reminding them they’re destined for success even on days when they might not believe it. Many are thankful you go beyond your daily duties to help them feel included, respected, and valued, especially when you sit in the balcony of Phillips Auditorium, beaming with pride as they defend their dissertations. Your devotion and kindness are out of this world!

Garth McCavana, as a GSAS alum and now Dean for Student Affairs, your work has improved the lives of students for more than 30 years. Whether you’re helping launch a new ESL program, rising before dawn to field student concerns, or heading to the infamous Discover Dudley night in full

costume, your affinity for students makes a world of difference. It's no wonder they're keen for their dean.

Erika McDonald, as questions and concerns mounted prior to the end of Harvard Time, you worked around the clock to calm nerves with the help of email reminders, training guides, and social media posts. And you provided in-person guidance and reassurance to faculty, students, and staff at FAS and across the University. It's high time we commend your hard work!

Michael Paterno, managing everything from small conference room upgrades to multimillion-dollar renovations for more than 28,000 square feet of complex scientific space is a professional accomplishment. But knowing every inch of the space and the people who use it—from their seat assignment to their thermostat bugaboos—is a personal triumph. Forget hydrogen. You're the number one element in Chemistry and Chemical Biology.

Hector Ruben Paz Nadal, you're equal parts creative aspiration and customer service with a heap of institutional memory. That's just the right recipe for making life as Executive Chef Manager at Dumbarton Oaks delicious. With unforgettable tamales, roast pheasant, hyper-local produce, and Elvis chocolate pudding, you have encouraged the spontaneous exchanges of ideas among well-fed fellows, staff, docents, and international scholars for 30 years. For your imaginative and unfailing service, they send their compliments to the chef.

Rosaline Rabi Salifu, from helping postdocs find winter-appropriate clothing and familiar groceries, to coordinating a visit from Sierra Leone's president, you leave no detail behind for the Center for African Studies. Even with an increase in high-profile events, the pressure of preparations never overcomes you. Your tireless work embodies Nelson Mandela's famous line: "It always seems impossible until it's done."

Clayton Scoble, your first months at Lamont Media Lab were a whirlwind of hiring and managing a team of 12 students, then assisting with vendor training, tech compatibility tests, and other prep work for the launch of a new large-format printer service. You even took the initiative to dive in to video editing so that you could run workshops. If that's your year-one debut, the Media Lab is headed for stardom.

Amy Thompson, you ensure that FAS classrooms have the technical equipment and support students need—and you make people feel like they're your top priority no matter how busy you are. Your focus on inclusion in the workplace means the many Year Up interns you've managed have gone on to thrive in other roles throughout Harvard. Your willingness to collaborate with others elevates you to hero status. Ms. Marvel was right: Good is not a thing you are. It's a thing you do.

Harvard Library

David King, as Senior Financial Analyst, you've reigned supreme. Your radical rethinking of the business model for Harvard Depository has helped the libraries save money and stay motivated about managing collections for future growth. Librarians are grateful that instead of issuing decrees, you attend their meetings and trainings to understand their work and help them meet their financial goals. You're a royal resource for the world's preeminent academic library.

Carie McGinnis, you guard our galaxy of library treasures from catastrophic mold, damaging vibrations, destructive dust, and harmful disorganization. Many marvel at your encyclopedic knowledge of valuable book conservation, depository deliveries, and relocations of major collections. In the endgame of keeping collections accessible for research, you're a superhero for the stacks.

Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study

Amy Benson, if imitation is the sincerest form of flattery, the fact that a database you built for Schlesinger Library was later adopted University-wide is outright adulation. You steer the Schlesinger's many resources to digital futures with limitless patience and persistent innovation. And you encourage colleagues to do likewise with guidance that makes them feel valued and motivated. By facilitating research for future generations, you'll go down in history for preserving history.

Graduate School of Design

Afshaan Alter Burtram, during a hectic time in the Department of Architecture, you managed an intense accreditation process and thesis reviews to high praise—all while preparing for a new role, training your own replacement, and welcoming a new chairperson. Colleagues say you're a departmental keystone, a proactive problem solver with a sense of humor that defuses stressful days. By all accounts, you're the one who gets things done at Gund.

Harvard University Information Technology

Shanton Anderson, with analytic aptitude and an attentive ear to developers and users, you've made life easier for thousands of our HR, IT and alumni affairs staff. As part of a multiyear, multimillion-dollar project to implement Qlikview, you helped teams across the University harness the power of fine-tuned reports and intuitive data dashboards to track progress and inform better business decisions. With you around, things just click into place.

Alisa Jahns, HUIT colleagues call you a human Swiss Army knife, able to tackle technical development, provide input on policies, document systems instructions, and provide training for end users. With your keen grasp of stakeholder needs and ability to keep project teams on point, you enabled a new feature for our research compliance portal to go live in a razor-thin turnaround time. You're clearly cut out for your work!

Albert Pacheco, you've led several Harvard teams through the stormy challenges of migrating some of our most complicated and most critical applications to the cloud. Your ethereal expertise helped ease frustrations, lower costs, and reduce downtimes for vital online operations. And your generosity with countless nights and weekends kept everything rolling like thunder. Your colleagues are glad you have your head in the clouds.

Harvard Divinity School

Daniel Hawkins, as the Divinity School’s CIO, your prescience about technology is perhaps no surprise. Calmly and carefully, you’ve successfully led both believers and doubters through transitions to everything from my.Harvard to EMS/RoomBook to Sharepoint. And your firm but reassuring guidance continues to be a saving grace during the transformation of Andover Hall. In a place where discussions often delve into ancient texts, you’re a providential link to the future.

Harvard University Police Department

Nick Park, employing maximum-level vigilance for more than 600 alarms and more than 8,000 locations across our campus, you take our security to a new level. You personally visit sites to verify whether alarms are working, to review false alarms with responding officers, and to observe varied lighting and visitor activity patterns. With you on the job to implement critical security improvements across the University, there’s no need for alarm.

Graduate School of Education

Santoshi Basnet, when the need arose, you dug deep to manage teaching fellow appointments during big transitions in Ed School operations. Despite being in uncharted territory, you supplied a treasure trove of unparalleled service and attention to detail. Rich in patience and determination, you effected change with minimal disruptions. For the Nichols House crew, you’re a priceless find.

Tracie Jones, your leadership is transforming our classrooms, offices, and break rooms into safe spaces that support belonging at Harvard. From a course on Martin Luther King, Jr.’s legacy to a new equity and inclusion program, you’ve created ways to support and empower students of color while engaging the whole community in critical discussions of equity, diversity, and inclusion. By building a more welcoming Harvard, you’re enabling future educators to build bridges and break down walls for a better world.

Rebecca Martin, shortly after joining the Ed School, a change in management expanded your duties to include shared leadership of the Gutman Library—and a complex, multiyear project to relocate its 120,000 special collections items. Or, put another way, “other duties as assigned.” But you rose to the challenges, helping expand the library’s capacity and enhance the research environment for students, faculty and staff.

Harvard University Health Services

Diane Janelle Holland, at University Health Services, you’re the heart of 3 East—a hub of support for the large Internal Medicine team that provides care to our community. As you assist colleagues and support the Lean initiative, you enhance the patient experience with your boundless enthusiasm and deep compassion. Colleagues don’t need a second opinion to conclude that you’re the best around.

Harvard Public Affairs and Communications

Stephanie Mitchell, let's be candid—you know how to capture Harvard's best side. With creativity far beyond the lens, you've chronicled 16 commencements and three inaugurations, dazzling University collections, VIP visits from dignitaries and celebrities, as well as everyday campus life. And you field steady photo inquiries, empower your crew, and manage our vast photo archive like it's a snap. Thank you for telling our story and recording our history, one stunning image at a time.

Harvard Human Resources

Selina Lee, in the dark ages of weeklong waits for workplace stats, you lit the way to instant data about Harvard's workforce. With dazzling perseverance, you've made sense of data not initially designed for reporting and analytics. Your behind-the-scenes brilliance has made it possible to highlight workplace trends and illuminate our progress on goals for workplace diversity, engagement, and retention, giving University leaders access to critical strategic data. You're a shining star in the firmament of magnificent metrics.