

Congratulations to the Recipients of the 2017 Governor's Awards for Public Service!

On May 17, 2017, Governor's Awards for Public Service were presented to state employees for outstanding achievement in seven award categories. In a ceremony at the Executive Mansion, employees were recognized for agency star, career achievement, community service and volunteerism, customer service, innovation, teamwork and workplace health, wellness and safety. The Commonwealth's partner in the awards, the Virginia Credit Union, presented a total of \$500 to award recipients in each category. This year, recipients were chosen from 188 nominations.

All photos are courtesy of Michael White, the Governor's photographer.



Governor's Agency Star Award **Karen Kimsey** **Department of Medical Assistance Services**



Ms. Kimsey currently serves as Deputy Director for Complex Care and Services for the Department of Medical Assistance Services (DMAS), which administers the state Medicaid program. Unwavering in her commitment to the Medicaid population of more than one million low-income Virginians, she invests time in relationships with advocates, providers, families, Medicaid enrollees, and other stakeholders. Over a 20-year career, Ms. Kimsey has demonstrated a remarkable ability to navigate the changing tide of political leadership, stakeholder influence and community sentiment while holding steadfast to her belief in the dignity and worth of every Virginian. She has led the development of four initiatives in the past three years alone, including the

Governor's Access Program for behavioral health and limited care, which was implemented in a record four months; addiction and recovery; and re-design of the community-based developmental disability programs. Under her leadership, Virginia was the third state in the nation to develop the Commonwealth Coordinated Care model of fully integrated and coordinated health care services.

Governor's Award for Career Achievement
Rue Collins White
Department of Human Resource Management

Ms. White exemplifies the retention of key talent in state government. What began as a promise to stay for at least three months in a high turnover HR job in central human resources evolved into a 43-year career in public service. Currently the Office Director for Agency Human Resource Services at the Department of Human Resource Management (DHRM), Ms. White has served in 11 HR roles at both line and central state agencies. She considers her role in the pilot decentralization of HR at the former Department of Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse Services a highlight of her career. Throughout her tenure, Ms. White has participated in or led multiple initiatives, including supporting former Governor Wilder's Southern Governors' Association and Joint African Trade Summit, serving as team leader for the Commonwealth's Reform of the Classification and Compensation System, and lending her expertise to the 2007 PEW Center's Government Performance Project – Grading the States - which yielded a grade of A for Virginia. Ms. White has served as the DHRM HR management consultant for agencies in the Health and Human Services Secretariat, and manager of HR policy for the entire state. In her current position, Ms. White oversees such areas as state policy, employment, employee compensation, salary administration, workforce analytics and a central fee-for-service Shared Services Center that accomplishes economies of scale for the Commonwealth. She serves as a member of the Veterans Workforce Development Steering Committee.



Governor's Award for Community Service and Volunteerism
Nathalia Artus
Department of Small Business and Supplier Diversity



Arriving in the United States from her native Brazil only seven years ago, Ms. Artus is the ultimate example of someone who loves her community, striving every day to give back and be involved. A regional lending manager for the Department of Small Business and Supplier Diversity, she is a very active community leader, board and committee member in over 17 different organizations in the Richmond area. Ms. Artus leads by example. Her community spirit has helped organizations as varied as a Bon Secours nonprofit to aid battered women, Family Lifeline, the Richmond Chamber of Commerce, the Organization of Women in International Trade, the March of Dimes, the Richmond Youth Philanthropy Project and the Industry Council for Virginia State University. She has taken on leadership roles in organizations such as the National Association of Women Business Owners (NAWBO), where she is the public policy chair. She serves on the Emerging Leaders Council and the Women's Conference Committee of the Virginia Bankers Association. Ms. Artus spends an average of 20 hours a month attending early morning breakfasts, luncheons and after work events related to these organizations. In addition, she finds time to teach Portuguese as a volunteer class instructor for Girls for a Change.

Governor's Award for Customer Service

Susan W. Roberts

Virginia State Police

A 15-year employee with the Virginia State Police office in Galax, Ms. Roberts exhibits an exceptional work ethic, professionalism, courtesy to the public, and devotion to the department in her work as senior secretary. She arrives at work early and often remains late to ensure the efficient operation of the work unit. Insurance agents seek her assistance on accident reports rather than contacting offices within their areas. Other area secretaries seek Ms. Roberts' guidance because of her day-to-day efficiency and expertise. At her own suggestion, Ms. Roberts has assisted other offices suffering tragedies such as tornadoes, loss of a family member or loss of a state trooper killed in the line of duty. Ms. Roberts has streamlined many facets of the Galax area office, including establishing special files for criminal offenders tracked by state police, tracking of accident data, documenting and customizing highway work zone department manuals. She also has taken the initiative to present an appealing, friendly atmosphere. She repainted and redecorated the interior of the office, planted flowers around the office perimeter and purchased a water fountain to make the office exterior more attractive to the public – all at her own expense.



Governor's Award for Innovation

Denise Rasmussen

Virginia Retirement System



Denise Rasmussen is the innovation leader in a multi-year business transformation program that is revolutionizing how customers interact with the Virginia Retirement System (VRS) and changing how the staff does its work. VRS is executing a program to eliminate paper, automate tedious manual processes and put comprehensive information in the hands of Virginia public employees to help them maximize their benefits. As the VRS Deputy Chief of Technology and Security Officer responsible for overseeing the modernization program, Ms. Rasmussen constantly encourages VRS staff to leverage business process reengineering and technology to advance customer service while increasing operating efficiency and reducing cost. Through her leadership, the modernization effort has already resulted in significant improvements for VRS employers, members and employees because of online access to information and electronic interactions. Since modernizing the system, VRS has processed 54,000 employer contribution submissions online for approximately \$16 billion in retirement contributions; since February 2016, over 117,000 members have accessed the new online portal to review or update account information; nearly 8,000 members who have left state service have requested an account refund online, with 99.7 percent of refund requests processed within five days of receipt; almost 63,000 members have gone online to create a benefit estimate; and 8,500 members have created a retirement plan. Ms. Rasmussen was the driving force behind a number of these improvements, and provided innovation, inspiration and leadership for all.

Governor's Award for Teamwork
Military Medics & Corpsmen (MMAC) Program
Department of Veterans Services

Launched last July, this three-person team of Mark Whiting, Beverly Van Tull and Philip Trezza embodies the spirit of teamwork, collaboration, leadership and engagement by changing the way healthcare systems hire veterans in Virginia. The MMAC program is the first and only state program of its kind in the nation to partner with major healthcare systems



in Virginia, working closely with six partner healthcare systems and multiple state agencies. In 2015, the Governor and General Assembly recognized the need for a pathway to employment and education for recently discharged veterans and transitioning service members who served as medics or corpsmen and wanted to stay in the healthcare field. The MMAC team has made a significant contribution toward the Governor's goals of creating long-term, high-paying jobs for veterans, reducing staff shortages in healthcare, and keeping veterans and transitioning service members in Virginia. Since December 2016, eight MMAC applicants have already been hired. The program has received 45 applications, with 36 in the screening and hiring process, and dozens of veterans who did not qualify for MMAC have received assistance to find employment in Virginia. In addition, MMAC staff built the infrastructure for the program, including the screening and referral systems, online application and the marketing plan.

**Governor's Award for Workplace Health,
Wellness and Safety**
Smita Jain
Department of General Services



Smita Jain practices the healthy lifestyle she promotes. At the Division of Consolidated Laboratory Services (DCLS) of the Department of General Services, she is considered a champion to remind and encourage staff to be safer and healthier. It is easy to get caught up with the day-to-day tasks of the workday and fail to focus on ergonomics, moving more, eating better and taking time away from stress to meditate. Ms. Jain is a passionate advocate for better health. A scientist by profession, Ms. Jain has served for three years as a volunteer coordinator for the CommonHealth employee wellness program at DCLS. Ms. Jain helps fulfill the division's mission to "promote a healthier world through quality laboratory service" internally to the DLS staff. She has introduced numerous programs to the laboratory, ranging from relieving stress, hypnosis and Chakra Balancing, to the Governor's "Walk the Skyline" walking challenge, weekly e-mails and weekly meditation sessions. Through her efforts, DLS in 2015 received a CommonHealth Wellness Workplace Award from the Governor and Secretary of Administration.

After the awards were presented, 19 state employee Ambassadors chosen at random from across the Commonwealth had the opportunity to praise the recipients for their achievements. The Ambassadors were selected from more than 900 who registered for the honor.

[See more photos](#)