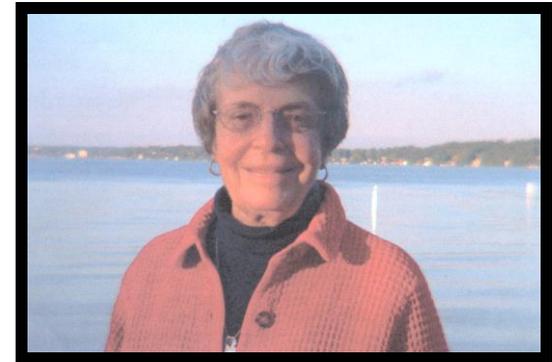


Twenty-Ninth Annual

Virginia Hart  
Special Recognition Award



May 24, 2012

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 28 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 Office of State Employment Relations.

## 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, Director  
Office of State Employment Relations

### Remarks

Justice Patience Drake Roggensack  
Wisconsin Supreme Court

### 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.~*

# 2012 Virginia Hart Special Recognition Award Recipient

*Janet Smith*

Department of Transportation

*Environmental Coordinator  
Department of Transportation  
Division of Transportation Systems Development – North Central Region*

Janet is an environmental coordinator for the North Central Region responsible for 18 counties and six Native American Tribes. She manages the environmental coordination between The Department of Transportation (DOT) and the regulatory agencies. She is a dedicated employee who takes her position seriously. She advocates for environmental protection while insuring that DOT projects move forward. She keeps the project teams and the environmental stakeholders informed, helping them find ways to meet their objectives. Keeping these diverse groups working together takes knowledge, tact and imagination.

One of the most important and complex tasks we do in the regions is to make sure our projects are in harmony with the environment. Janet keeps up to date on all environmental laws and requirements and helps our planning, design, construction and maintenance teams insure their projects take into account all potential environmental impacts. She is looked upon by her peers to be an expert in the environmental field. She administers environmentally beneficial management practices in her work as well as in her community activities, displaying strong leadership skills.

Janet is the driving force in the North Central Region, making sure that DOT wetland restoration sites are well designed and maintained, to offset the wetland losses associated with DOT projects. Her work at DOT is an accurate testament to her dedication and compassion to Wisconsin natural resources. On a day-to-day basis Janet is constantly juggling the pressure from numerous organizations, including the Army Corps of Engineers, DNR, EPA and various consulting firms in order to complete her daily tasks. She embraces these challenges with enthusiasm and is passionate about making the planet a healthy place for future generations.

She does an exceptional job at working on large and complex transportation projects to find reasonable ways to avoid and minimize the impacts that these projects can have on the environment. She is respected by her peers because her

great communication skills and enthusiasm are combined with solid technical skills. Janet is able to easily translate environmental and transportation issues to the wide variety of people involved on these projects including engineers, the public, state, and federal regulatory staff. Her efforts to work through complex issues and her skill at making sure that environmental impacts don't get "lost in the mix", results in timely regulatory reviews and helps to ensure that projects will best serve the broad public interest.

Janet has worked on all environmental phases and wetland issues. She is knowledgeable in many areas outside of work as well, due to her many interests. She has diverse skills and her creative approach to problem solving is an asset to the department.

The quality most admirable in Janet is her ability to negotiate and problem solve. It is through her ability to understand people and communicate, that she is able to resolve conflicts efficiently and effectively. She is very practical in her management plans. She focuses heavily on the ecological quality of a site, and does so in a way that is economical for the state. Janet goes beyond the call of duty simply for her love of the outdoors. She is a good team member that allows other people's ideas to be considered for the overall betterment of DOT's projects.

Janet is truly an advocate for the environment on both a personal and professional level. She strives to ensure that the environmental impacts of every project are fully considered. Janet's work on wetland mitigation bank site development has resulted in well-established, diverse, healthy wetlands that will provide a habitat for all sorts of flora and fauna.

Janet has been an invaluable member of the North Central Environmental Team. She can be relied on to fulfill all that is asked of her and beyond. She is responsible for most of our wetland banking development and oversight as well as being involved in our threatened and endangered species program. Janet is always willing to help out anyone statewide and serves on a number of statewide committees for the DOT. She is never afraid to get her hands dirty or her feet wet. She helps out in relocating species in danger from our projects and identifying wetlands that may be impacted.

She has extensive knowledge of wetlands and wetland mitigation, and her coordination efforts with various environmental agencies have resulted in the successful preservation and creation of numerous wetland sites in the region.

Janet is very creative finding ways for enhancements to be created in conjunction with highway projects; resulting in strong partnerships with agencies and people involved in the process. As a great example of her abilities, she led the efforts to broker an agreement between DOT, EPA, USACOE, USF&WL, and DNR to mitigate a new highway's 110 acre wetland impact in the confluence of the

Wisconsin River, just north of the city of Stevens Point. This effort required technical expertise, creative negotiation skills, and the ability to listen to others opinions to come up with the best possible environmental solution to a significant environmental impact.

Janet has many achievements that have benefited the citizens of Wisconsin. She was instrumental in the development and restoration of the Moses Creek project. The project was undertaken to help compensate for the wetlands impacted by one of DOT's large projects. Restoring the creek to a more natural condition helps to return a 17-acre swath of northeast Schmeckle Reserve to a more natural ecosystem. This major restoration project recreated the natural meanders of the stream and restored the historic floodplain. This site provides great learning opportunities for the University of Stevens Point and neighboring high schools.

Another of her great successes has been the restoration of Lost Creek in Portage County. This site is one of the largest Mitigation Bank sites in Wisconsin. Although still relatively new, the site is serving as a migration stop for trumpeter swans and other migratory birds as well as a home for many grassland dependent birds. The site has also resulted in the restoration of the creek to a pristine enough condition that it now houses trout again; a major accomplishment. Janet is our Regional expert on endangered species, and has assisted other specialists with endangered raptor, mussel, and plant species surveys and mitigation plans. She has written a biological opinion on the bald eagle, surveyed and monitored Karner blue butterflies; a federally protected invertebrate, in addition to being a State threatened and endangered species. She has also written and implemented a mitigation plan for successful translocation of lupine and Karners. She has been valuable in implementing the Karner Blue butterfly Habitat Conservation Plan; working with the Department of Natural Resources for reasonable accommodations of wetlands, animal crossings, and habitat protection.

Janet also directs environmental interns from the University of Stevens Point throughout the year. She mentors them, so that they can be effective when they enter the workforce and are charged with protecting the environment. Every student that has trained under Janet has very high praise for the professionalism Janet exhibits. Janet has provided them with immense learning opportunities, both in the field and in the office. The professional mentoring and the level of knowledge she has shared with students is truly remarkable.

Janet has a genuine concern for the environment that she works to protect. She understands what it takes to be a team player. She is willing to do whatever it takes to complete a job, even if it involves a personal sacrifice on her part.

Janet is an amazing woman, who as a single mother of two, overcame amazing personal challenges while continuing to follow her passions. Her main passion is working toward improving the natural environment of Wisconsin. She follows this path both in her selected career and her personal life. She has been very

instrumental in passing on that attitude to students through the internship program and acting as a guest lecturer in a variety of natural resource classes. Janet also remains active within the natural resources professional community by being involved with committees and continuing her education whenever possible.

She is a certified Wildlife Biologist and wetland professional and is involved in numerous trainings for both the DOT and other groups. She has served on the board of the Aldo Leopold Chapter of the Audubon Society and serves as the current co-chair of the Wisconsin Implementation Oversight Committee, a Habitat Conservation Plan for the Karner Blue Butterfly, which serves as a model for the nation. Additionally, whenever time permits Janet can be found volunteering her time for various community or environmentally related activities.

Janet's personal motivation and professional dedication to protect the resources of the state are exceptional. She lives, breathes and is passionate about the environment, balancing the impossible job of working with the public and private sector, while looking out for the best interest of the DOT. It is her way of life, and it is so refreshing to see that natural passion in a person.

Janet truly epitomizes the type of woman that the Virginia Hart award is meant to recognize. She balances family with a deep passion for assisting the citizens of the state of Wisconsin and preserving the environment for generations to come in all aspects of her life.



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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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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 OSER 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 Jennifer Gebert, Office of State Employment Relations, at (608) 267-2155 or email [Jennifer.Gebert@Wisconsin.gov](mailto:Jennifer.Gebert@Wisconsin.gov).



## Friends of Virginia Hart

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

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Nancy Wenzel and Robert Bartlett  
Barbara Wyatt Sibley

## Honorable Mentions

### Amie Egstad

*Conservation Warden*

*Department of Natural Resources*

*Division of Law Enforcement*

Conservation Warden Amie Egstad has worked for the Department of Natural Resources since 1994, spending the first 13 years of her career stationed in Winnebago County handling enforcement activities including the resource rich Lake Winnebago system. Amie transferred to Bayfield in 2007 and has been involved in marine enforcement responsibilities on Lake Superior and inland duties on the Bayfield Peninsula. She strives to serve the people of Wisconsin through professional enforcement, safety education and protection of the valuable resources of this great state.

Acting as an ambassador for the warden force, Amie openly recruits potential future wardens by engaging students in what a conservation warden career has to offer. The future vitality of Wisconsin's warden force depends on the recruitment and training of highly qualified individuals that have a strong desire to serve the citizens of the state. A critical role in determining the qualifications, integrity and dedication, lies with the background investigator. Amie has served as a background investigator for the department for a number of years, conducting background checks, face to face interviews and considerable travel to thoroughly complete the process and ensure that only those applicants with outstanding character are selected.

By attending specialized training in defense and arrest tactics, Amie has established herself as a competent well-respected defense tactics instructor. She shares this expertise with conservation wardens around the state, also providing training to the two most recent warden recruit classes. She also serves as a Field Training Officer (FTO) since 1998. Unquestionably, this is one of the most critical roles a warden can undertake; thus providing a consequential element in guiding the protection of the state's resources well into the future.

When not actively striving to make Wisconsin's warden force better, Amie serves the people in other important capacities. Annually, Amie organizes an annual pheasant hunt, structured around the Learn to Hunt program sponsored by the Department of Natural Resources. Youths are offered the opportunity to partake in training involving firearms safety, dog handling, biology and management of pheasants, before actively taking to the field and participating in a hunt with experienced volunteers. The experience is always well received by those who attend while leaving with a greater appreciation of a Wisconsin outdoor tradition.

Amie actively participates in a couple of annual events designed to introduce youth to fishing. The Les Voigt Hatchery in Bayfield holds an annual open house that introduces hundreds of area youth to fishing and other outdoor opportunities, and the annual kid's ice fishing day, organized by the Ashland Bayfield County Sportsmen Club; which annually attracts over one hundred youth.

Recreational vehicle riding is very popular in the state no matter what the season. In winter, snowmobiling has always enjoyed significant participation in the state. Boating on the great lakes and thousands of inland lakes in the state is also a huge attraction. Recreational vehicle enforcement and safety education play a crucial role in keeping the trails and waters safe and enjoyable for the public. Unfortunately, recreational vehicle accidents do occur, thus preventive enforcement and accident investigations are an important part of the warden's duties. During the past year Amie has investigated and assisted in four major accident investigations occurring while operating ATV's, snowmobiles and boats. These investigations are an important part of understanding how and why accidents occur and attempting to eliminate as many causes as possible through trail improvements, recreational vehicle design and safety education.

Working jointly with Tribal Wardens from the Redcliff and Bad River Tribes; Amie conducts commercial fishing monitoring, and enforcement activities on Lake Superior. Past history shows without protections, these valuable resources can be overharvested, and a balance must be maintained for sustainable populations.

Amie is as comfortable working from a snowmobile as she is from a patrol boat, with recreational boating enforcement added to her efforts; it's easy to see how Amie's time is at a premium. The Apostle Island area of Lake Superior is an enormous draw for recreationists, and wardens have to effectively manage work effort to be as responsive as possible to the needs of the public and the resource.

Law enforcement agency relationships are crucial to wardens to effectively respond to public demands for law enforcement responses. Wardens' administrative areas are immense when compared to most other law enforcement officers; so maintaining close relationships with other law enforcement agencies is important. Amie has established great working relationships with multiple agencies that oversee natural resources, including Tribal Natural Resources agencies and local police in the area. There is no hesitation from either side when calls for assistance come in.

Amie is a consummate professional and humbly serves the people of Wisconsin while continually striving to protect the resources we all enjoy.

## Rose Larson

*Corrections Unit Supervisor*

*Department of Corrections*

*Milwaukee Secure Detention Facility*

Rose Larson is a Corrections Unit Supervisor for the Department of Corrections at the Milwaukee Secure Detention Facility (MSDF). Rose supervises a unique and challenging group of offenders including: Orientation (new offenders), Program Segregation, female general population and female segregation, as well as special needs; which can include individuals with mental health needs, physical handicaps, or other offenders considered vulnerable in a general population setting. Rose is further responsible for the supervision of the Institution Chaplain, and social workers, while also assisting with coordinating outside volunteers who come into the facility to provide religious services to those incarcerated.

Rose is creative and always willing to go the extra mile, she thinks outside the box and finds new ways to solve problems and constructively fill offenders' time. Rose was responsible for coordinating and implementing a pet therapy program at MSDF, in which community volunteers bring in trained therapy dogs for the offenders to interact with. Rose is a leader, maintaining great relationships with her staff and staff from different departments, institutions, and community agencies. Her ongoing commitment and hard work helps to create and maintain a safe and healthy working environment for all other employees and offenders. She is held in very high esteem by her peers as well as offenders due to her ongoing commitment to provide assistance, and by treating everyone with respect and dignity. She is often asked to spearhead institution projects and initiatives outside of her regular duties, because of her reliability and commitment to making such things successful.

Recently, she identified and worked with Federal IRS Agents to investigate a tax scam that originated with an offender at MSDF. She worked diligently to gather information, review offender phone calls, conduct interviews, and assist the IRS in their investigation.

For many years, Rose was responsible for the organization and implementation of a Friends and Family day at MSDF. This event allowed community members and family members of employees the opportunity to come into the institution and learn more about corrections and operations within the facility.

Along with her myriad of duties within MSDF, Rose is also a statewide coordinator and investigator for DOC's Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA). Her duties in this domain include designing and providing training to bring awareness to Corrections staff and offenders about ways to identify and report

sexual misconduct or assault within Correction settings. Rose also tours other state institutions and facilities to audit their vulnerabilities and preparedness for PREA related concerns; when necessary she also investigates allegations of misconduct and/or assault, in cooperation with facility management and local law enforcement. Rose has worked diligently in this role to ensure a more secure and safe environment for those individuals incarcerated in correctional institutions or under supervision in the community.

Outside of her daily responsibilities at MSDF, Rose coordinates a local art auction which includes various types of original art, woodwork creations, sewing and crocheting projects, and other items created by offenders from around the state. This event, held annually since 2002, is done in collaboration with the Cathedral Center in Milwaukee; all proceeds from this auction go directly to the Center, which provides emergency shelter and case management services for women and families who are homeless or experiencing a housing crisis. During the 10-years this auction has been successfully managed by Rose; DOC & MSDF have contributed roughly \$30,000 to help women and families in crisis in our community. Rose works with many outside individuals, agencies, and organizations to get much of the materials for these projects donated; allowing offenders an opportunity to engage in meaningful restorative justice projects. She also works with the media to appear on local television to help promote the auction.

Rose also volunteers on her own time to meet with outside community groups, such as the Prison Action Milwaukee (PAM) group. PAM consists of concerned community members, business owners, and other community stake holders working together to provide reentry resources and opportunities to offenders returning to their communities and families. Their focus and goal is to improve quality of life for offenders as well as reduce recidivism rates by allowing more successful reintegration. Although this is not an official work responsibility, it parallels another of Rose's roles at the facility as the institution's re-entry coordinator. In this role, she is responsible for coordinating reentry initiatives within the facility and working in collaboration with re-entry staff at the statewide and administrator level. As the re-entry coordinator; Rose works with families, supervision agents, institution staff, and community agencies to help ensure the most successful community reintegration of offenders.

As one can see, Rose is a busy woman; committed to her work and her community. Besides her involvement with work related projects and volunteer activities, Rose also volunteers her time with another community group that raises money for small local charities. She is currently the Treasurer for the Lake Country Charities Connection, a volunteer organization that raises funds annually to be donated to small, local charities who do not receive funding from large contributors. For example, the LCCC sponsored the charity Katy's Kloset last year, which is an Equipment Lending Library specializing in assistive devices

and medical equipment for children and adults. The equipment is loaned out free of charge to families and individuals who need it. Katy's Klose is completely run by volunteers, and counts on various organizations and individual donors to pay rent and utilities.

On top of all of this, Rose maintains a wonderful relationship with her daughter and husband, as well as extended family. She is very involved in school activities with her daughter, spends time traveling with her family and visiting family who live out of state. Rose truly is one those "super-humans", who seems to always put herself last, making sure others' needs are met, whether at work, home, or in her community. One cannot help but feel respect and admiration for the contributions Rose provides to not only Wisconsin State Government, but also the public and inmates who many others have given up on.

## Mary Kay Sergo

*Reentry Director  
Department of Corrections  
Office of the Secretary*

Mary Kay has an incredible vision for the Department of Corrections (DOC) and remains steadfast in her dedication to implement evidence based practices in all areas and make widespread, systemic changes in how the DOC operates. She is a tireless worker who instantly earns respect from all who come in contact with her. She is a fair and consistent leader, who supports her staff and encourages them to grow and develop in their professional careers.

She works to break down barriers that threaten the progress she has made in the area of reentry for the state of Wisconsin. She seeks solutions to problems rather than allowing them to interfere with positive gains.

She is greatly admired by her co-workers and staff as someone with integrity, passion, and incredible work ethic. While there are many characteristics of Mary Kay's leadership that could be described, we can emphasize the vision and foresight she demonstrates on a daily basis amidst contextual hardships, challenging personalities, and finite resources. In a word, the best way to describe her vision is, "relentless". Several years ago, Mary Kay set forth a tremendously ambitious goal for the criminal justice system. This goal called for a continuum of assessment and case planning built on a common language of evidence based practice. With the use of special funding, she laid out a plan for the State of Wisconsin to become a recognized leader in Corrections. This plan accounted for one risk and needs assessment (COMPAS) to be used not only across all corners of the department, but also by courtrooms and criminal justice agencies across the state. This is perhaps one of the most progressive initiatives in terms of correctional evidence based practice being attempted anywhere in the United States.

What separates Mary Kay from others is that she not only put the wheels in motion, but throughout the past 3 plus years, has been the singular, unwavering voice that has kept the department focused solely on the end goal. She has removed road blocks, managed scope, secured and dedicated additional resources, and demonstrated flexibility in the face of additional discovery. As most of us know, large scale change can be difficult when you add external factors such as budget cuts, changes in leadership, and divisional reorganization. Through it all, Mary Kay has remained steadfast in her vision for the department and assisting offenders in Reentry.

Through Mary Kay's determined and skillful leadership, the COMPAS project will early this year complete Phase 1 of our implementation plan, 9 months ahead

of schedule. All 21 Wisconsin prisons and over 150 Probation and Parole units will have been trained by the end of March 2012, and fully integrated in a transparent, common assessment, case planning and documentation process.

None of this success would have been possible without Mary Kay's involvement. She has a way of bringing people of different viewpoints together bridging the gaps that have historically kept the various stakeholders within their silos, and creating a common vision for what the Department of Corrections can become: a model for the rest of the country to emulate. She has a can do spirit that is infectious, and an uncanny ability to get things done. She knows when to push, and when to let others lead, which is a trait that enables her to gather the kind of support a huge undertaking like this needs. Mary Kay's work is setting in motion a way of business that will reduce recidivism, prevent victimization, help offenders live more fulfilling and productive lives, and save millions of taxpayer dollars.

Mary Kay's success springs, in part, from her rich experiences in the criminal justice field. She started her Department of Corrections career in 1995 as a Correctional Officer at Dodge Correctional Institution. She then began coordinating volunteer services and training staff in restorative justice and victim impact at the Winnebago Correctional Center. During this time, Mary Kay also held a job as a case manager at a community-based corrections agency. She has served as the Program Director at the Wisconsin Resource Center and at the Redgranite Correctional Institution. In 2002, she became the Assistant Superintendent at John C. Burke Correctional Center in Waupun. She was promoted to Superintendent of McNaughton Correctional Center in 2005 and began her current position as the Department's Reentry Director in March of 2007.

As you can see, Mary Kay has held a variety of challenging positions within the agency preparing her for her most daunting position to date. Shifting correctional practices and aligning the corresponding business processes are a massive undertaking. Mary Kay has faced this challenge with all of her heart and soul and inspires all those around her to do the same, never wavering from the goals of the Reentry.

Mary Kay is not only making a difference within the department, she is working every day to make our world a better place by making Wisconsin a safer place for our children and families. She makes substantial contributions to the public she serves and will continue to have an enormous impact on enhancing public safety by reducing recidivism for years to come.

## Nicole Teasley

*Human Resources Supervisor  
Department of Health Services  
Division of Enterprise Services*

In 2009, an Executive Order was issued by the Governor to move the administration of income maintenance services from Milwaukee County to the Department of Health Services (DHS). A subsequent Assembly Bill required DHS to establish a Milwaukee County enrollment services unit to determine eligibility and administer income maintenance and state supplemental payment programs in Milwaukee County. The bill further required that supervisory personnel in the unit be state employees and all other employees in the unit be a combination of state and Milwaukee County employees. Under the bill, DHS was given the authority to supervise, and adjust grievances with respect to the County employees performing services for the unit. However, the County employees remained on the County payroll and benefits systems. The unit was comprised of approximately 275 Milwaukee County employees and 25 state employees.

This bill created an unprecedented civil service state/county hybrid model of personnel administration. It required the DHS Bureau of Human Resources to lead the charge on negotiating new local agreements with the Milwaukee County union. It also required creating work rules and workplace policies to fit within the parameters of Milwaukee County collective bargaining, Wisconsin civil service statutes and administrative rules, while operating state and Milwaukee County payroll and benefit systems concurrently. It soon became obvious to DHS that they needed a person to be in charge of all the personnel issues related to the new Milwaukee Enrollment Services unit (MILES).

Nicole was assigned to MILES in early 2010, where she quickly and independently created a human resources office. In her first year, Nicole trained new state supervisors, most of whom were former Milwaukee County employees, on state civil service, and DHS processes and procedures. She learned the state and Milwaukee County's payroll system. She became an expert on Milwaukee County AFSCME Council 48 collective bargaining agreement becoming an invaluable member of the MILES labor/management team. She created and provided employee training and orientation to hundreds of County employees, who needed assistance understanding how the state/county hybrid arrangement impacted them. She spearheaded the development of a multiple choice centered exam, to hire Income Maintenance Specialists. She tirelessly fielded countless employee and supervisor questions, responded to numerous appeals and complaints from the Wisconsin Employment Relations Commission and the Equal Rights Division. She conducted many employee disciplinary and fraud investigations, helping to uncover fraudulent activity in the income maintenance programs. Nicole did all these things in her first year on the job.

In Nicole's second year, a provision was included in the 2011-13 Budget providing funding authority for DHS to replace the Milwaukee County positions in MiES with state positions. The budget further went on to stipulate that previous bills providing for the state/county hybrid personnel arrangement would sunset on December 2011, thereby ensuring that MiES would be comprised of only state employees beginning on January 2012. The budget was effective on July 2011, which meant that Nicole had only six months to see to the termination of the existing 275 Milwaukee County FTE, and to the hiring of approximately 300 state FTE approved by the budget.

In order to accomplish this, Nicole was instrumental in the creation of a new classification, because there was no existing classification in state civil service that matched the work being done by the Milwaukee County employees. After the new classification was created, Nicole oversaw the examination and rating of over 1000 applicants. She coordinated over 500 interviews, and oversaw the hiring of over 300 new state employees. She also worked with OSER to develop procedures for the non-competitive certification and selection of existing Milwaukee County employees under the provisions outlined in Wisconsin Statutes. Nicole managed to complete all of the above, in addition to her regular duties, in just six months. She hired and trained three of her own employees during that timeframe as well.

Nicole came in and played a critical role as a change agent in creating an efficient and highly functioning unit. MiES faced its fair share of challenges when it came under the administration of DHS in 2009. Employee poor performance was rampant. Nicole trained the management team on HR policies and to properly screen new hires. In spite of early struggles, MiES now operates like a well-oiled machine. Supervisors know their roles and responsibilities related to HR functions. Employees are happier, better trained, and more productive.

While Nicole's accomplishments over the last two years have been nothing short of extraordinary, what really makes her special is that she has exceeded expectations on every assignment she's ever been given, out of a simple sense of duty and commitment to her job and the employees she serves. She is incredibly humble, she doesn't complain, she never asks for favors, she's not flashy, and she doesn't toot her own horn. She is just an honest to goodness hard worker who really wants to do right by her employer. While the work Nicole does is not highly visible to the public, without her hard work, the state's overhaul of MiES would have been a complete and utter failure resulting in thousands of people not receiving benefits and costing the taxpayers millions of dollars. Nicole Teasley truly is an unsung heroine of state service, and I believe she exemplifies all the qualities Virginia Hart demonstrated.

## Leslie Van Buskirk

*Supervising Attorney, Enforcement Bureau  
Department of Financial Institutions  
Division of Securities*

When Leslie Van Buskirk took over as Supervising Attorney of the Division of Securities Enforcement Bureau in 2008, she was the only attorney in the Enforcement Bureau. In addition to having to supervise all of the examiners and clerical staff, she was responsible for drafting all of the legal documents and making all of the decisions related to enforcement. The early months were a challenge for Leslie, but given her inner drive, she persevered.

Today, the Enforcement Bureau is fully staffed and Leslie and her team continue to work tirelessly for the good of Wisconsin investors. The Enforcement Bureau's track record during Leslie's years as supervising Attorney is impressive -18 cases referred for criminal prosecution, all successfully prosecuted, and over \$11 million returned to investors as a result of those prosecutions.

Leslie's work on behalf of the Division of Securities is exemplary, but it is not the first thing her co-workers would cite if they were asked to describe Leslie. Among the personal qualities cited by her co-workers are: She's really smart and a really competent lawyer, as well as incredibly hard working. Her decisions and advice carry great weight, she never says no to a request for help; even though her plate may be full. She's incredibly kind and loyal; she would do anything for anyone. She is a very devoted single mom to a teenage son, a superb role model.

Leslie is a perfectionist and always tries to excel at whatever task she is performing. For her, trying hard is not good enough. She wants it done right and puts all her efforts into it, always working long after others have gone home.

Leslie's commitment to her profession extends beyond the walls of work. She serves on the board of the State Bar of Wisconsin Business Law Section and is active on several committees for that group. Her expertise on investor fraud is often featured in industry trade publications and she has been called upon to speak on topics such as potential securities risks in real estate transactions for the State Bar. She is completing her second year as chairperson of the Arbitration Project Group for the North American Securities Administrators Association (NASAA), the oldest international organization devoted to investor protection.

The association leadership specifically selected Leslie to serve as chairperson of this group. This was not only because of Leslie's long service to the group, but because of her passion for the topic, her effectiveness at getting things done and her understanding of the importance of the issue.

Despite the dual demands of her job and that of a single parent, Leslie finds time to give back to the community. She is a member of her church Parish, where, according to her former co-worker, Leslie is a good parish mom who volunteers with church-related activities and events.

She also has been active for nearly 20 years with Make-A-Wish of Wisconsin, including six years as a board member. Leslie is a trained volunteer who works with children and their families to get to the heart of the wish they desire. Last year, she came to an event and brought her son along to volunteer. She's a quality lady with a very demanding career and duties as a mom. Yet she still makes time to stay involved. It's because she has the passion.

## Darcey Varese

*Financial Officer*

*Office of Justice Assistance*

Darcey Varese is a Financial Officer, responsible for the integrity of millions in state and federal funds. In January 2011, our Executive Director retired, and our Justice Programs Supervisor accepted an appointment with another Department.

Due to these vacancies, Darcey took on both roles in addition to her own very demanding workload. She did all three jobs for a year, until a new Executive Director was appointed in late December 2011. Taking on these tasks meant she took on numerous management and administrative responsibilities as the Acting Director of an agency with 63 employees, taking direct supervision of 14 staff members in the Criminal Justice, Juvenile Justice and Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) Units, in addition to her 7 staff in the Grants Management Unit.

Remarkably, she kept her equanimity and her smile throughout this very challenging year, while also maintained the high financial standards that allowed OJA to pass with flying colors, audits by the Wisconsin Legislative Audit Bureau, the US Dept. of Justice, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Region V, and the US Dept. of Homeland Security's Office of Inspector General.

In addition to these accomplishments at work, she is a Girl Scout Leader and contributes to her community as a hockey mom and fundraiser for her children's school & activities.

Darcey is held in high esteem by her subordinates and peers. She accepted a level of responsibility far beyond the limits of her job description; she sustained extraordinary achievement of these additional responsibilities as well as performing her own heavy workload, and is a community leader. She makes a big difference in state service.

# Pamela Zank

*Corrections Program Supervisor  
Department of Corrections  
Waupun Adult Correctional Institution*

Pam has been a dedicated public servant for well over 20 years. She has always performed her duties in a professional manner; as a Sergeant, Lieutenant, Captain, and in her current role as the Program Supervisor at Waupun Correctional Institution, overseeing the Behavioral Health Unit and Segregation Building.

Pam works well with staff from all disciplines in dealing with these very difficult populations. Pam has worked diligently with psychological services and social services staff, in the development of meaningful programs and policies dealing with the mentally ill, and with conditions of confinement issues both in the special management setting and with the segregated population. She has excelled working in the implementation of these programs.

Pam conducts her regular duties as well as taking on additional roles. Some of her "extra duties", include assisting the Department as a PREA (Prison Rape Elimination Act) investigator and other investigations. Pam also maintains involvement in the Local Sexual Assault Response team meetings in this area. In addition, Pam maintains professional relationships with local Technical Colleges. While at KMCI, she coordinated internships with Lakeland College as well as Moraine Park Technical College.

As Administrative Captain at KMCI, Pam conducted numerous staff and inmate investigations; all high quality, timely, and very well done. Pam was well respected by Labor at KMCI, not an easy task for anyone that has worked there. She was routinely utilized to maintain good working relationships between management and the union.

Pam was always active in the community and educational Institutions in the KMCI area. Lakeland College and MPTC interns were coordinated thru Pam. She always assists in the Career Day at the MPTC criminal justice program, and sat several panels on women's issues in the correctional field, and continues to do so today.

Pam was a lead on the Crisis Negotiating Team at KMCI. As a PREA investigator, she was called upon routinely because of her skill and expertise. She has added instant enhanced credibility to our program. She is an excellent role model for all students, particularly our female students. Pam has also been a major part of our yearly "Careers in Corrections" workshop and pre-graduation benchmark for the MPTC Corrections students.

Pam was always extremely professional and her ability to interact with staff and inmates was always very noticeable. Her straightforward approach to difficult issues served the staff and general population very well. Pam was always highly respected by all departments. Pam also dedicated many hours to community involvement for the greater good. Her organization/participation in activities such as Shop with a Cop and Relay for Life were prime examples of her caring spirit. Pam is an excellent role model for all correctional staff.

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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 28 years. Help us establish an endowment so the award will live on for years to come.

We are asking you to make a 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
Roberta Gassman	Christine Lidbury	Hannah Rosenthal
Henry Hart	Governor Patrick Lucey	Karen Timberlake
Jesse & Nancy Hart Hernandez		

## Office of State Employment Relations

A proud supporter of the  
**Virginia Hart**

**Special Recognition Awards**



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



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The 2012 Award Program and Reception  
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## 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

## Award Program Coordinator

Dee Surillo

## Award Committee

Mary Becker  
Ed Kehl  
Louise Karpinski

## Nominees for 2012

Rhonda L. Alley  
Rolanda D. Barnes  
Gail Barwis  
Leanne Bergstrom  
Jennifer Bias  
Cheryl Brigowatz  
Gloria Cervantes  
Lea Collins-Woracheck  
Kathy Curren  
Anna Eggebrecht  
Amie Egstad  
Rebecca A. Grangaard  
Linda Guelig  
Kay Haishuk  
Kristing L. Hart  
Sandra Herum  
Lucy Hilgendorf  
Eileen Hocker  
Major Sandra Huxtable  
April Jaeger  
Karen Kasten  
Mary Kirkpatrick  
Najova Ksontini  
Rose Larson  
Stephanie Luebke  
Carolyn Malcolm  
Jeanette Martin  
Germaine Mayhew  
Carolyn Normand  
Tiffany Novinska  
Rene O'Connor  
Nancy J. Olig  
Sandra Paske  
DeAnn Paulson-Wam  
Deanne Schaub  
Mary Kay Sergo  
Janet Smith  
Judy P. Smith  
Patricia Struck  
Georgina Taylor  
Nicole Teasley  
Ann Trachtenburg  
Leslie Van Buskirk  
Darcey Varese  
Janice Watzke  
Kathy Wellington  
Anna Wisner  
Pamela Zank