The CUIMC Women’s Employee Resource Group would like to thank those who nominated Staff and/or Faculty women of influence at the medical center to be spotlighted during women’s history month.

Many women in the workplace do not realize the level of influence and impact they have on the people around them. There are always misperceptions that we need some magic something to have an impact or to influence others. The fact of the matter is people see us, listen to us, and agree to do things for us more often than we realize.

"Surround yourself only with people who are going to lift you higher" - Oprah Winfrey
"The great gift of human beings is that we have the power of empathy" - Meryl Streep
"Spread love everywhere you go. Let no one ever come to you without leaving happier" - Mother Teresa
"I've always believed that one woman's success can only help another woman's success" - Gloria Vanderbilt
WOMEN’S HISTORY MONTH 2021

SPOTLIGHT: CUIMC WOMEN

Maura Abbot, PhD, NP

Assistant Professor of Nursing
Assistant Professor of Nursing
Oncology Sub-Specialty Program Coordinator
Director of Nursing/Director OCIU
Division of Hematology & Oncology

NOMINATOR’S COMMENTS

Maura is an incredible mentor, professor, and leader. As someone who straddles the worlds of academic and clinical medicine, she demonstrates that opportunities for women in the workplace are endless. I wish every woman had a positive and uplifting role model like Maura!

BEST ADVICE YOU HAVE RECEIVED

I think the best professional advice I have ever received I heard twice once from a Nursing mentor and again from a physician colleague. They told me “know what you know, and more importantly know what you don’t know. Know where to look for answers and when to ask for help. If you do this, you will always do what is best for your patient.”

FUN FACT

I love to dance although I’m not very good at it, but I still dance like no one is watching
SPOTLIGHT: CUIMC WOMEN

WOMEN’S HISTORY MONTH 2021

Amanda Alonso

Associate Director of Clinical Trials
Clinical Research Core
Columbia University Irving Medical Center

NOMINATOR’S COMMENTS

Amanda is such a great Director and friend. To be able to balance both aspects in a work environment is not an easy task. She always goes above and beyond, is such a great example of a woman who can work hard, make a name for herself and not take herself too seriously is something comforting and relatable that is needed more in the workforce. Amanda is always looking for ways to educate herself to better understand our work POV, while also becoming a better leader and role model. Even in situations that may not be ideal or are unexpected she always seems to find the positive in new changes and make us feel like it can always be better. I nominate Amanda because she's more than just a working woman, she is a leader, a friend, a role model and someone I want to be more like.

BEST ADVICE YOU HAVE RECEIVED

Don't try to be what you aren't by "correcting" your weaknesses. Work with people whose strengths complement your own so you can lean on each other to fill the gaps.

FUN FACT

I repeated Kindergarten and didn't find out until I was a teenager! It was a shock, but it made sense since in retrospect since I remember feeling very confident about my ability to color within the lines. (The age cut off was different when I switched schools, so they made me repeat.)
Fay Awad

**SPOTLIGHT: CUIMC WOMEN**

**Fay Awad**

**WOMEN’S HISTORY MONTH 2021**

**NOMINATOR’S COMMENTS**

Fay defines hard work, passion, dedication, well driven and a comedian. She lights up the room when it can be in its darkest times. Always positive and trying to lift everyone around her up. Her energy screams through the roof, in such a stressful environment. She lost her best friend, dad, to Covid and was still able to rise above everything she had to face to shine as a true star she is.

**BEST ADVICE YOU HAVE RECEIVED**

To never live by society’s standards, be courageous to be different.

**FUN FACT**

I’m striving to look for that light after my father’s passing.

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Authorization Referrals Specialist I Clinical Revenue Office (CRO) Faculty Practice Organization
Lourdes Bailey

Revenue Cycle Credit Balance Supervisor
Clinical Revenue Office (CRO)
Faculty Practice Organization

NOMINATOR’S COMMENTS

When I was deployed to work with the Credit Balance team, she took me under her wings and taught me the credit balance of refunding patients, she was very careful in her action not to offend and very tentative when explaining what needed to be done, she recommended me for a position, because she believed in me, not only because she trained me, but because she knew even though I was not with her long as full time, she knew my capabilities.

BEST ADVICE YOU HAVE RECEIVED

The best professional advise I’ve received was to never stop learning. There is always something new to learn. This keeps us humble, not to think we know it all because there is always something new to learn.

FUN FACT

A fact about me is that while I was in college obtaining my degree, I worked with Preschoolers as a teacher in my town. I did that for many years, the classroom was fun and different every day, I learned so much from each of them. Now my kids (students) are older, and they still remember me, when I see them in town, they always stop me to say hi.
Carolyn Baldwin

**Clinical Operations Supervisor**
Department of Medicine
Experimental Therapeutics

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**SPOTLIGHT: CUIMC WOMEN**

**WOMEN’S HISTORY MONTH 2021**

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**NOMINATOR’S COMMENTS**

She leads her staff by example and fosters teamwork and collaboration. She takes on additional tasks always with a smile and a positive attitude. Carolyn takes initiative, goes beyond and above, and always gets the job done overcoming any unforeseen obstacles. From closing a practice to open a new one - she has done it all, with grace and perfection.

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**BEST ADVICE YOU HAVE RECEIVED**

I have learned to never give up and persevere. Working from the bottom up has taught me structure, compassion, integrity, and leadership. I believe that everyone has a common goal to be successful but being able to assist in one’s journey is an honor.

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**FUN FACT**

I am truly down to earth and love to bring out the best in people with offering to plan a getaway.
Tessa Bascombe

Director, HR & Operations
61st Street Service Corporation

NOMINATOR’S COMMENTS

I nominate Tessa Bascombe because she is an exceptional leader to work with. She provides timely support, guidance and a balanced leadership for me to work effectively as a project specialist in HR. Tessa is a delight to work with. She is a very positive and knowledgeable individual in her area of Human Resources.

BEST ADVICE YOU HAVE RECEIVED

Adaptability is the key to managing and connecting with others and building relationships because you cannot treat and react to everyone in the same manner and expect the same result.

FUN FACT

I rolled down a hill when I was in primary school in the Caribbean and I the right side of me cheek was swollen. When the swelling went down it turned into a deep dimple on my right cheek.
SPOTLIGHT: CUIMC WOMEN

Stephanie Blaney

Department Administrator
Department of Orthopedic Surgery

NOMINATOR’S COMMENTS

Under her leadership and guidance, she has made us more cohesive and productive management team and converted all of our skills into strengths. She also has a remarkable ability to bring out the best in all of us and makes us feel confident in taking on new challenges and responsibilities.

BEST ADVICE YOU HAVE RECEIVED

"Wash the windows! When I worked at Mass General Hospital, one of my early mentors was Dr. Ellen Braaten, who is the Director of the Learning and Emotional Assessment Program in the Department of Psychiatry. When I first started working with her, I asked her how she advanced in her career and for advice. She passed on the same advice to me that was given to her by her mentor, wash the windows! She advised that I should always be willing to get down in the trenches and get my hands dirty because managers and co-workers will always remember me as someone who was willing to do whatever it takes to get the job done. Since becoming a manager, I have consistently shared that same advice with members of my team, and I’m proud to say that I have a group working with me who would never hesitate to wash the windows!"

FUN FACT

Two years ago, I headed on my first solo trip—a yoga retreat in Bali. While walking through Ubud on a sweltering 95-degree day, I was ambushed in the street by a thirsty monkey who was ready to fight me for my iced coffee. Well, the monkey won. I was left terrified and thirsty, with his handprints on my dress to prove it!
Claire Brieva, DNP

Nurse Practitioner
Hematology & Oncology| OCIU

**NOMINATOR’S COMMENTS**

Claire is an AMAZING DNP, and always takes great care of our patients in the OCIU. A lot of times a visit to her helps pt to avoid a trip to the ED! Inspirational in so many aspects. She is kind, intelligent woman who gives the BEST patient care.

**BEST ADVICE YOU HAVE RECEIVED**

Healthcare is an ever evolving, complex field. One of my mentors always reminds me that collaboration is essential for positive health outcomes. I feel empowered to collaborate with my team members with the knowledge that I am never alone.

**FUN FACT**

A fun fact about me is I have six siblings - four sisters and two brothers.
WOMEN’S HISTORY MONTH 2021

SPOTLIGHT: CUIMC WOMEN

Ellie Byrnes

Revenue Cycle Manager
Clinical Revenue Office (CRO)
Faculty Practice Organization

NOMINATOR’S COMMENTS
She handles negative situations with altruism and knows to get something positive out of it. She has deep empathy for others showing always an outstanding professionalism and great charisma. She is always willing to help others to rise, grow and expand professionally and personally. She focuses on expanding collective strength, power and positive impact at all times.

BEST ADVICE YOU HAVE RECEIVED
Never ask anything of your team that you yourself wouldn’t do." I started out doing exactly what my team does, I know what they have to do and have done it. I believe that is an important part of managing people, understanding the key components of the task at hand. And, I need to have as much faith in myself as my mentors have in me.

FUN FACT
I had never been to Europe and in 2019, I got to go twice in one summer. Spain in July for my son’s international soccer competition and Italy in August to see family. It was a great and fun summer!
WOMEN’S HISTORY MONTH 2021

SPOTLIGHT: CUIMC WOMEN

Rosie Calcano

Administrative Aide
Department of Medicine | Cardiology

NOMINATOR’S COMMENTS

Rosie is the best. She’s very helpful and thinks about others before herself. She taught me everything I needed to know and is always here when I need her. I love working with her.

BEST ADVICE YOU HAVE RECEIVED

Always smile and be pleasant. Leave your personal feelings/life at home as soon as you walk into work.

FUN FACT

I enjoy interacting and making people laugh. Especially, when they are having a rough time at work.
Jazmine Celentano

Customer Service Specialist II
Clinical Revenue Office (CRO)
Faculty Practice Organization

NOMINATOR’S COMMENTS

Jazmine is so helpful! She is always pleasant when asked a question, or when a call is being transferred. A smile goes a long way when you’re new and navigating a new workspace.

BEST ADVICE YOU HAVE RECEIVED

The best professional advice I have received is to always ask questions, embrace criticism and never be afraid to learn or try something outside of your comfort zone.

FUN FACT

One of my bucket list dream vacations would be to go to Greece!
Jazmine Clark

Medical Secretary
Department of Medicine | Cardiology
Center for Interventional Vascular Therapy

**SPOTLIGHT: CUIMC WOMEN**

**WOMEN’S HISTORY MONTH 2021**

**MOMINATOR’S COMMENTS**

Jazmine is extremely helpful and very knowledgeable. She comes in everyday with a smile on her face and brightens up everybody day. I enjoy working closely with her.

**BEST ADVICE YOU HAVE RECEIVED**

View every person you meet as a door that may lead you to a new opportunity because you never know how a person can add to your life professionally or personally.

**FUN FACT**

My biggest fear is bugs and if you want to see me sprint across the room like Flo-Jo, just mention the word bug.
Tabitha Cruz
Medical Secretary
OB/GYN

SPOTLIGHT: CUIMC WOMEN

WOMEN’S HISTORY MONTH 2021

NOMINATOR’S COMMENTS

When we started Epic she was the one that helped everyone out to. She was the one I went to when I needed help and she didn’t mind helping out.

BEST ADVICE YOU HAVE RECEIVED

Don’t be afraid to speak up!” When you participate and speak up, employers/supervisors/managers will notice that you care about your job and take it seriously.

FUN FACT

I love to read. I live in many fictional world’s, realms, and alternate realities.
Mary D’Alton, M.D.

Chair
Department of Obstetrics & Gynecology

NOMINATOR’S COMMENTS
As one of the most senior leaders at CUIMC, Mary is a role model to many in her department and across the University and NYP. She mentors and supports other women and makes everyone feel important, no matter what their role is in the University. She always is caring and focused on the positive. She has many academic and clinical achievements, including playing a pivotal role in the effort to reduce maternal mortality and morbidity in New York State and in the national conversation about how to improve maternal health.

BEST ADVICE YOU HAVE RECEIVED
The key to success is found in 3 A’s- be available, affable, and able.

FUN FACT
I am the eldest of 7
NOMINATOR’S COMMENTS

Nikki is definitely the person I would choose to receive this because of her work ethic as well as her heart. She is a person you can count on or turn to help navigate through any struggles of the workday.

BEST ADVICE YOU HAVE RECEIVED

To always be humble no matter what position/role you’re in and to treat everyone equally and with kindness and respect.

FUN FACT

I sky dive, I’m certified in kayaking and white-water rafting.
Francesca Di Leo

Revenue Cycle Supervisor
Clinical Revenue Office (CRO)
Faculty Practice Organization

**NOMINATOR’S COMMENTS**

Francesca is always there when you need her no matter what time it is and she always gives you a word of encouragement and always helps you strive for bigger and better things in life. She knows how to communicate with all of us and tell us what we can do to make our work a little bit easier when we get frustrated about anything. I feel she’s the best. She has a heart of gold.

**BEST ADVICE YOU HAVE RECEIVED**

Keep a positive mindset, venture outside your comfort zone, always strive to learn and share ideas.

**FUN FACT**

I love socks with funky designs, my favorite being Dachshunds or flowers.
Caroll Duncanson, RN

Clinical Nurse Manager
Department of Dermatology
Columbia University Irving Medical Center

"Caroll is one of my mentors. She reminds me to keep moving forward especially when things are hard. That there is great value in the journey of achievement. She is a caring educator and motivator who is always striving to move the needle in a positive direction.

At one point in my career, when I was at a cross road, deciding whether to continue to do direct patient care or whether I would take a senior management position, a dear friend gave me advise that I share to this very day. He told me that my influence would always be with patients because of my passion and love for nursing, but that my influence could be even greater if I inspired new and young professionals to be passionate about loving their work and having the desire to care deeply for the people we serve. I could safely know that many more patients were receiving the care and compassionate that I so enjoy giving. Throughout the last twenty years of being a Clinical Nurse manager my motto has been, to love and inspire my staff, to love and care for our patients. There has been no professional gift greater than this, that others are inspired to be excellent at patient care.

A fun fact about me is I LOVE home design and have thought I of becoming an interior designer in retirement. I binge on home design channels and magazines whenever I get a chance."
WOMEN’S HISTORY MONTH 2021

SPOTLIGHT: CUIMC WOMEN

Julie Fisher

Division Administrator
Department of Medicine | Cardiology

NOMINATOR’S COMMENTS

Julie is quite the exceptional leader. She is a professional at all times and has an incredible ability to be fair to all her staff under all circumstances. Julie Fisher makes it that much easier to be able to come into work each day. I am extremely grateful to her leadership. I nominate Julie in hopes she is recognized for the great human and professional she is.

BEST ADVICE YOU HAVE RECEIVED

My father, a 96 year old WWII veteran, is an artist. When I was quite young, he tried to give me art lessons. I wanted to go straight to painting pictures but he insisted upon teaching me the basics about the color palette first. He taught me to be patient and to understand the “basics” before jumping ahead.

FUN FACT

A member of my staff gave me my own bobble head “Super J. Fisher to the rescue”
Sophia Fuentes

Customer Service Specialist I
Columbia Doctors
P&S

NOMINATOR’S COMMENTS
Sophia is such a great person to work with she makes my day go so smooth, she never has an attitude and is just so pleasant every call which is so needed at this time she is greatly appreciated

BEST ADVICE YOU HAVE RECEIVED
Don’t be afraid to ask questions.

FUN FACT
I’m teaching myself Korean! This will be my third language 😊
Amorita Gharib, RN

Clinical Supervisor
Department of Rehabilitation and Regenerative Medicine

NOMINATOR’S COMMENTS
Her work is just outstanding!

BEST ADVICE YOU HAVE RECEIVED
Treat everyone as they would be your loved one.

FUN FACT
I love pets 😍
WOMEN’S HISTORY MONTH 2021

SPOTLIGHT: CUIMC WOMEN

Tasha Green

Assistant Practice Manager
Faculty Practice Organization

NOMINATOR’S COMMENTS

It would be impossible to count all the ways that you’ve helped me in my career. Thank you for continuously challenging me to reach my full potential by stepping out of my comfort zone. You are more than just a leader, you are an inspiration! Whenever I’ve needed words of encouragement, you were right there and whenever I made a mistake, you transformed it into a valuable lesson. I can’t thank you enough for your kindness, advice, and your faith in me. You are the best!!!

BEST ADVICE YOU HAVE RECEIVED

I have received a lot of great professional advice over the years. I think one of the best was from very early on in my career, “You must listen to hear what a person is saying, not listen to respond.”

FUN FACT

I love watching crime scene investigation shows. I really enjoy solving/putting the pieces of the puzzle together.
Kenya Guerrero

Revenue Cycle Supervisor
Clinical Revenue Office (CRO)
ColumbiaDoctors

NOMINATOR’S COMMENTS

She has always assisted with a positive attitude and is always willing to help an employee in need. She has inspired me to move ahead and remain positive no matter the circumstance. I feel she deserves recognition as she has been, and continues to be, a great inspiration to me.

BEST ADVICE YOU HAVE RECEIVED

To always be myself, to be humble, to never give up and to always remember my biggest competition is myself.

FUN FACT

Treat and care about coworkers as they are my family, even working under pressure I would make a funny comment to bring up the energy and soothe the tension.
WOMEN’S HISTORY MONTH 2021

SPOTLIGHT: CUIMC WOMEN

Stacy Hall

Billing Manager
Department of Medicine | Cardiology
Center for Interventional Vascular Therapy

“Stacy is a strong independent intelligent woman who has a kind heart, she’s a great listener - always willing to help, oh, she also has amazing curls!”

BEST ADVICE YOU HAVE RECEIVED
Your work is a reflection of who you are.

FUN FACT
I sing to my kids in our car during road trips... really loud!
Joanny Hernandez
Manager, Human Resources and Academic Affairs
Faculty Practice Organization | Primary Care Initiative

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WOMEN’S HISTORY MONTH 2021

SPOTLIGHT: CUIMC WOMEN

Joanny is not just our HR representative at the CRO. She always has gone above and beyond. She sends us random positive notes to keep the team uplifted.

BEST ADVICE YOU HAVE RECEIVED

The best professional advice I have ever received was that nothing beats tenacity and persistence. Even if your talent isn’t there yet, you can always develop it to what it will be someday. If you continue to be persistent, determined, focused and have a really clear and defined goal, nothing compares to that. Always going after what you want and not giving up is huge.

FUN FACT

The bravest thing I’ve ever done was go snorkeling in the middle of an ocean in Jamaica, when I could barely swim in 4 feet of water – go figure 😊 - but I enjoyed it.

COLUMBIA | Columbia University Irving Medical Center
Jennifer Herrera-Perry

Medical Secretary
OB/GYN

WOMEN’S HISTORY MONTH 2021

SPOTLIGHT: CUIMC WOMEN

NOMINATOR’S COMMENTS

She is an amazing co-worker. Always available, taking more on than is her responsibility. She never complains about anything just takes it upon herself to get things done. She’s always reliable, rain, snow or tornado she is always in here ready to cover everyone who can’t make it in.

BEST ADVICE YOU HAVE RECEIVED

The best professional advice I’ve received is to remember that ultimately, the patient is our boss. We’re here to provide a service for them and their choice between different organizations will be based on quality of work. So always strive to make yours better.

FUN FACT

A fun fact about me is that I’m a member of the Dickens Fellowship of NY and I also enjoy dancing salsa.
SPOTLIGHT: CUIMC WOMEN

Maria Howell

A/R Representative | Team Lead
Clinical Revenue Office (CRO)
Faculty Practice Organization

NOMINATOR’S COMMENTS

She helps our team stay motivated so we can do our best work. She makes us feel valued and supported. She knows what are strengths and weaknesses are and she helps us in areas where progress is needed. She goes above and beyond her duties for a lead. I’m thankful for Maria for being a caring person. She appreciates her staff. And we appreciate her to the utmost.

BEST ADVICE YOU HAVE RECEIVED

Don’t take things personal - get all the knowledge you need to do your work perfectly – take courses and be knowledgeable.

FUN FACT

I love to Joke around with my staff like I’m their big sister/mother /friend – not only do I have a professional relationship with my staff . I have a personal relationship as well . I’m very down to earth person when you get to know me.
WOMEN’S HISTORY MONTH 2021

SPOTLIGHT: CUIMC WOMEN

Julia Louisa Iafrate, D.O.

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NOMINATOR’S COMMENTS

She is not just a doctor but a teacher to me. At rehab medicine, I get to learn something new each time she’s having a procedure with me. It’s something unique of her. She deserves praise.

BEST ADVICE YOU HAVE RECEIVED

Sometimes it takes years for someone to become an overnight success. So learn to say “no” when the opportunity doesn’t suit your drive or your passion.

FUN FACT

If I hadn’t gone into medicine I probably would have become an ESPN commentator!

Sports and Dance Medicine Physician
Director of Dance Medicine
Assistant Professor
Department of Rehabilitation and Regenerative Medicine
Erin James

Director of Strategic Communications
Facilities Management & Campus Services
Columbia University Irving Medical Center

**NOMINATOR’S COMMENTS**

In her role, not only does Erin oversee all departmental communications for the CUIMC Facilities team, but she is also the highest-ranking Black woman, as well as the highest-ranking Black person altogether in the entire CUIMC Facilities Department. Furthermore, she performs her role with the highest level of excellence, as well as with the highest level of decency, respect, and professionalism towards anyone and everyone, regardless of their job title, race, background, and education.

**BEST ADVICE YOU HAVE RECEIVED**

"Stay focused. Be smart. Do you." My father has sent this text message to my sister and I every morning since we both started our professional journeys. It’s simple, and often reminds me that, regardless of the situation, I can be most successful when I remain true to who I am.

**FUN FACT**

I was given the opportunity to DJ (very briefly) in a nightclub in Capri.
Heakyung Kim, M.D.

"Heakyung Kim, M.D. is an exceptional teacher and does that so open heartedly, spending her time to teach residents, fellows or medical students. She empowers other women at work and has organized several workshops for either Women in Medicine or for all the physicians in our department (male and female) to help them progress professionally."

"The best advice I received was to always be genuine and to believe in myself. Whether in patient care or research endeavors, I always strive to be authentic in developing relationships and providing evidence-based care. Additionally, I would not be where I am today without the confidence that I could succeed in whatever I put my mind to."

"If I were not a doctor, I would have been either a fashion designer, and was even a Calvin Klein model for a hospital fundraiser, or an ambassador and have traveled to over 35 countries."
Eileen Kay, RN

Clinical Coordinator III
Department of Medicine
Hematology & Oncology

NOMINATOR’S COMMENTS

Eileen is the memory bank, and the glue that keeps Bates/Fojo clinic together. As a colleague she is sweet, kind, and someone anyone could work with. Intelligent and often reminds me of things I have to do for patients. Her report with our patients is off the charts! She inspires me to improve in any way possible to put our patients first.

BEST ADVICE YOU HAVE RECEIVED

The best advice that I have ever gotten is to remember to always have patience and be kind.

FUN FACT

I love Disney World!
WOMEN’S HISTORY MONTH 2021

SPOTLIGHT: CUIMC WOMEN

Kimberly Kwei

Assistant Professor of Neurology
Department of Neurology

NOMINATOR’S COMMENTS

Dr. Kwei had her 2nd baby a couple of weeks before the Pandemic and she was in service during the worst time of the crisis and Melissa never stopped working also during that time. I did cry like a baby in my office that day feeling completely hapless. I was able to see from my window, the two containers with the dead bodies, between the Neurological Institute and Milstein but, after interacting with each one of them, I felt that we have to keep going... That’s exactly what each one of them said in the end.

BEST ADVICE YOU HAVE RECEIVED

Balancing work and home life, you sometimes feel like you’re doing everything badly, but you should keep pushing forward.

FUN FACT

I can wiggle my ears!
Holly is an influential leader. She has extended herself to help others, continues to lead effortlessly and provide sponsorship without being asked. Her contribution extends beyond the school of nursing as she volunteers her time on committees and working groups that will have a lasting impact like those related to diversity, equity and inclusion.

“If you don’t ask, you won’t get.” As a woman, these were important, empowering words from a male mentor that encouraged me to advocate for myself, my career, my team, and a budget that enables me to continually bring best practice HR to my employee populations.

My immediate and extended family refer to me as the “Best Cold Cook” – a label given to me by my son when he was 2 years old. While my husband takes the cake for making actual “real” meals, I am the one they go to for elaborate charcuterie boards, homemade dips, and the 10-ingredient tuna salad that prompted my son’s accolade!
Sally Ledesma

Manager of Practice Operations
OB/GYN MFM

NOMINATOR’S COMMENTS

Mrs. Ledesma is a very Empathic manager. She is understanding hard working helps with everything she can no negativity at all. SHE IS JUST THE BEST YOU CAN GO TO HER FOR ANYTHING AND SHE IS THERE TO HELP OR SIMPLY LISTEN TO YOU...

BEST ADVICE YOU HAVE RECEIVED

Someone once told me, “Always copy the good things and not the bad ones”. I have to say this has stuck with me for many years and I always try to do by it to the best of my abilities.

FUN FACT

I do CrossFit. I do a combination of lifting weights and conditioning exercises.
Leigh Leibel

NOMINATOR’S COMMENTS

For the past three years, I have been working next to this woman that continuously inspires me in so many ways, but mainly with her ability to seamlessly multi task, her ability to focus on her goals and the way she deals with patients, which moves me. I have watched this woman single-handedly work on several international projects while simultaneously juggling zoom meetings while meeting all her deadlines with ease and flow. Her focus and drive has inspired me to go back to school and not give up on my academic goals. No matter the age, anyone can achieve their goals and I have to thank her for being my constant cheerleader and always cheering me on with positivity! She often helps our cancer patients deal with the difficulties of this dread disease. She does this by sitting, listening and holding space for them to express their fears and stresses without judgement (as she often does with me). The woman I describe is Leigh Leibel, Yoga Therapist - Integrative Medicine and I nominate her for Woman’s History Month 2021!

BEST ADVICE YOU HAVE RECEIVED

Meditate for 20-minutes every morning!

FUN FACT

I was a producer at CNN during the Fall of the Berlin Wall
Oana Leric

Practice Manager
Department of Pediatrics

NOMINATOR’S COMMENTS
Oana is a caring person who has not only earned the respect of her superiors but she has also earned the admiration of her peers. She’s been here for us when we need her and supports us, while rising the place to a higher level by giving an example of honesty and work ethic.

BEST ADVICE YOU HAVE RECEIVED
Accept that you can’t make everyone happy no matter how hard you try, just always give your best.

FUN FACT
I came to NY at 18 years ago from Romania and had to cross the ocean to meet my Romanian soulmate.
Yafen Liang

Assistant Practice Manager
OB/GYN

NOMINATOR’S COMMENTS

Through the pandemic Yafen took over the reigns of the site @ Columbia Doctors Midtown OB/Gyn department. Yafen, with the help of her boss decided to allow most of the employees to work from home. She was able to utilize a system using the process of on and off. This gave the employee time to work from home and time to work in the office. She came into the office 5 days a week fully aware that she might catch the virus, but she kept everything going. In my opinion, that’s a woman that cares about her employees and made every intention to make them safe.

BEST ADVICE YOU HAVE RECEIVED

One’s reputation will always precede them and to handle everything with grace.

FUN FACT

I’ve traveled to over 50 cities and counting!
Rosalie Long

Chief Operating Officer
Faculty Practice Organizations
ColumbiaDoctors

NOMINATOR’S COMMENTS

Rose has an amazing history in healthcare, as she started her career as a nurse. She is very kind to transmit that knowledge to everyone that works with her and whoever interacts with her. Her strong leadership makes her a referent and role model for any woman that wants to advance her career in healthcare administration. In addition, after all the hard work she did during the Epic implementation + how well she managed the reopening of our operations during COVID, she deserves to be recognized and applaud. A powerful woman, a role model, humble and hard worker.

BEST ADVICE YOU HAVE RECEIVED

The best professional advice I have ever received was to not be afraid to venture outside of my comfort zone. Throughout my career I have taken on roles that presented new, difficult and sometimes daunting tasks (coordinating emergency management response for 6 hospitals in NYC post 9/11 for example). Each time I learned as much as I could at a granular level as well as at a high level and walked away at the completion of each with skills that I could apply throughout my career.

FUN FACT

I am an introvert (as tested over the years using MBTI!!! but no one believes me).
**WOMEN’S HISTORY MONTH 2021**

**SPOTLIGHT: CUIMC WOMEN**

**Sharay Louden**

**NOMINATOR’S COMMENTS**

She makes the workplace a much more exciting place. From her leadership to her humor, Sharay knows how to keep everyone involved and focused.

**BEST ADVICE YOU HAVE RECEIVED**

Our goal is for all patients to have a great patient experience while visiting our practices. The best professional advice I have received to accomplish this goal is to always smile (even underneath your mask) when interacting with patients, actively listen to capture all details when engaging with patients, and to instill our core values into our daily workflow while working with patients and people you encounter in your daily life.

**FUN FACT**

I have twin brother and we both, along with our dad, love to eat banana pudding without the actual bananas.
**DONNA LYNNE**

Senior Vice President and Chief Operating Officer  
*Columbia University Irving Medical Center*

Chief Executive Officer  
*ColumbiaDoctors*

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**SPOTLIGHT: CUIMC WOMEN**

**NOMINATOR’S COMMENTS**

Donna’s calm demeanor, work ethic, and command of the situation during the pandemic is truly amazing. She makes me feel like Columbia is managing the pandemic in the best way possible, and I believe sets an example for other institutions to follow. She has been present in our DA meetings, our CAN meetings, and our HR meetings, always delivering information in a direct yet kind manner. She is someone that I look up to and try to emulate, and I am very grateful for her leadership during this very difficult year.

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**BEST ADVICE YOU HAVE RECEIVED**

Don’t be intimidated by new career opportunities that represent a ‘left turn’ in your career path”. My comment: This has made me describe my career as “non-linear”. I went from public sector jobs to private sector, back to public and now back to private. I started off in Budget/Finance and morphed to labor relations, then to healthcare, then to operations and then back to healthcare with an operations focus. Each change gave me new skills and opportunities to learn.

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**FUN FACT**

Beginning with age 52, I have climbed over 70 mountains that were over 14,000 feet in elevation—including three that are over 19,000 feet. Or: my 2020-22 challenge is to climb to the highest point in all 50 states; so far 33 are done with 17 to go. Lowest point is Florida—343 feet; highest is Alaska 20,210 feet.
Mayra Marte-Miraz

WOMEN’S HISTORY MONTH 2021

NOMINATOR’S COMMENTS

Mayra has been at the University for many years as a pioneer in departmental operational services. There are so many at CUIMC who rely on Mayra’s guidance and have profound respect for her. Mayra is always willing to provide support and often coordinate medical care within the Department of Medicine for faculty, staff and their families. You can count on Mayra day and night. Mayra is very kind and thoughtful and she continues to exemplify strong work ethics, compassionate leadership and partnership.

BEST ADVICE YOU HAVE RECEIVED

In a world where you can be anything, be KIND. A mentor from a few years back told me to never be afraid of making and sharing your mistakes as it makes you a better human.

FUN FACT

I just learned to ride a bike during the pandemic! I like to bake for fun when I have time.

Director HR, Faculty Affairs and Operations
Department of Medicine
Columbia University Irving Medical Center
SPOTLIGHT: CUIMC WOMEN

WOMEN’S HISTORY MONTH 2021

Diana I. Mejia

Assistant Vice President | Campus Operations & Housing Services
Columbia University Irving Medical Center

NOMINATOR’S COMMENTS

She’s a leader amongst leaders and knows how maneuver herself and shine in a male dominated industry without losing the sensitivity to see and understand all sides.

A true leader you can get behind.

BEST ADVICE YOU HAVE RECEIVED

The best professional advice I received was from a former Vice Dean of Public Health whom I reported to. He shared with me 4 key phrases to help me be mindful as I do my work:

a. Turn the fish over – Reminder to always consider the other viewpoint or perspective
b. Not everything is a fire – Reminder to let things cool off, especially in the heat of the moment
c. Keep an ace in your pocket – Always try to reserve something that is valued by your client/customer/person you serve so that you can play that “card” to help resolve a problem, sweeten a situation or enhance an experience for someone.
d. Be a sponge – You can always learn something, one thing from each experience/situation/project/event, etc.

FUN FACT

I love to have my feet propped up at 90 degrees against the wall to do some deep thinking...odd but true. Supposed to be good for the heart.
Kathleen McVeigh

**NOMINATOR’S COMMENTS**

Kathy McVeigh is a kind-hearted, hard working, and wise leader who I feel very lucky to know and learn from. She is always giving of her time and I have gained so much from the guidance she has shared with me. I can say that she truly does make the workday that much better with her caring ways and positivity.

**BEST ADVICE YOU HAVE RECEIVED**

It was not necessarily the advice I received but more the trust that my supervisors and colleagues had in me to perform my duties and responsibilities. Having this trust has been a vital link to my success throughout my 40+ years at Columbia.

**FUN FACT**

Love Hallmark movies and uplifting TV shows, love my dog, and I can wiggle my ears.
Angela M. Mills, M.D.

Chief, Emergency Medical Services
Department of Emergency Medicine
Columbia University Irving Medical Center

"Dr. Mills has been an exceptional leader throughout this pandemic. She has been the face of strength and resilience for our Department as well as an admired leader. Dr. Mills is one of my favorite people at CUIMC."

"Listen without judgement. When you are speaking with someone, focus on what is being said and be an active listener. We all come to conversations with our opinions and biases. Rather than forming conclusions and making decisions in the middle of a discussion, take time to actively listen and absorb what is being said. This allows for you to learn and understand more, for others to feel heard, and for better decision-making skills."

"I am an Italian dual citizen and enjoy speaking Italian whenever I have the opportunity."

Fun Fact

Best Advice You Have Received

Nominator’s Comments

WOMEN’S HISTORY MONTH 2021

SPOTLIGHT: CUIMC WOMEN
SPOTLIGHT: CUIMC WOMEN

WOMEN’S HISTORY MONTH 2021

Kaylen Montero

Patient Services Representative
Faculty Practice Organization
ColumbiaDoctors

NOMINATOR’S COMMENTS

Women should not wait for that tap on their shoulder to be reminded of how important they are. Kaylen inspires me to take a step back, analyze a situation, and calmly take initiative towards the path I want to go. For this I am eternally grateful.

BEST ADVICE YOU HAVE RECEIVED

Clarity is your strength. If you feel ambivalent about it, do not be scared and ask. The chances are that you are probably not the only one thinking it, just the one with the courage to ask.

FUN FACT

I love to cook and bake. Just like music and art it is my form of fun, unique expression.
Kim Morel-Betances

Director, Patient Access
Columbia University Irving Medical Center

**SPOTLIGHT: CUIMC WOMEN**

**WOMEN’S HISTORY MONTH 2021**

**NOMINATOR’S COMMENTS**

Kim is one of the most kind individual I have ever met. Doesn’t matter the time of day, or day of the week. She always make time to assist, answer, mentor and yes hold my hand. 2020 and now 2021 have been very difficult to me. I lost many family members, colleagues and friends. Perfect example was this past week where I was informed about the lost of my 1st cousin and my oldest sister. Kim was there to console me through my lost. She not only treat me in this fashion but her entire staff & colleagues have been fortunate to be part of a great team and report to incredible women.

**BEST ADVICE YOU HAVE RECEIVED**

Work for the job you want...not the one you have.
Understand the meaningfulness of your role. Even what may seem as a small part, make a big impact in the overall success.

**FUN FACT**

I twirl the baton!
Georgia Morgan

**NOMINATOR’S COMMENTS**

Georgia is a humble hard working staff member. Always willing to help out another person in need. She also very selfless, thoughtful and kind hearted.

**BEST ADVICE YOU HAVE RECEIVED**

The best professional advise I have received is to “work smarter, not harder.” If you just heard the words it sounds like the lazy way out, but one must look deeper. It is with that simple quote that I realized there is no shame in asking for help from others. The bigger picture is that we are all part of a team and each role, no matter how small, is intricate to the whole. When we help others, we create masterpieces in opening the lines of communication and knowing that they will return the favor.

**FUN FACT**

I love experimenting on family members with trying new meals and baked goods.
Margaret A. Murphy, RN

“"Nomination’s Comments"

Annie was my preceptor and my mentor, she welcomed me warmly with a lot of care, support and encouragement. As an immigrant nurse and mom of 5 kids, from different culture and language Annie contained me, contained my concerns my hesitations and gave me the push to progress and flourish professionally. Also Annie is the Ambassador of the ethical and professional values, she implements this in each meeting with the patient or his family and in each work situation. Annie is a great WOMAN, NURSE AND PERSON. She definitely deserves the award!

"Best Advice You Have Received"

Never be afraid to ask questions and own your mistakes

"Fun Fact"

Clinical Coordinator III
Department of Medicine
Division of Hematology & Oncology
WOMEN’S HISTORY MONTH 2021

SPOTLIGHT: CUIMC WOMEN

Maria Negron

NOMINATOR’S COMMENTS

 Truly exceptional at what she does and sincere to the core. Her dedication and sincerity to the job reaffirms that there are still people out there who care about their fellow person, whether it be patients or her coworkers.

BEST ADVICE YOU HAVE RECEIVED

Vulnerability is never a sign of weakness and can become your greatest strength.

FUN FACT

I was born on Leap Year and although my body ages, my voice stays “small”. It reflects my tender age of 8.

Practice Manager
Department of Medicine
Division of Rheumatology
Rudiana Odeh-Ramadhan

Vice Dean for Finance & Administration
Vagelos College of Physicians and Surgeons

NOMINATOR’S COMMENTS

Rudi exemplifies an outstanding supervisor, leader, and mentor. She's always available, easy to talk to, understands the ins and outs of working at Columbia University, and super resourceful in all terms relating to the professional development and growth.

BEST ADVICE YOU HAVE RECEIVED

A good leader is self-assured and confident, but it is humility that makes an excellent leader. Never stop being humble.

FUN FACT

I was named to CNN’s Intriguing People list in 2010. See https://news.blogs.cnn.com/2010/09/03/fridays-intriguing-people-25/

I am one of 8 children and grew up in Michigan.
Rosa M. Oquendo-Torres

LPN / Supervisor
Faculty Practice Organization | Facilities

“Working with her makes the job feel less like a job, great team player have learned so much in so little time i have here. There is always room for improvement.

I appreciate my staff, they receive a” Thank you” at the end of the day. They are amused by this stating. They have never had a supervisor who thanks them every day.”
Melody Ortiz

Director of Operations and Finance
Department of Rehab and Regenerative Medicine

WOMEN’S HISTORY MONTH 2021

SPOTLIGHT: CUIMC WOMEN

Melody is an extremely competent, and professional leader, and yet kind and caring towards everyone. Every employee could look at her and learn how to improve their work. She is always ready to help others with a positive attitude, has great knowledge related to her work, and exceptional managerial skills. Our department and Columbia University could not have asked for a better person. Melody is the ultimate example of positivity, discipline, and a strong work ethic.

BEST ADVICE YOU HAVE RECEIVED

If you shine, I shine and if I shine, you shine. Part of being a good leader is teaching and sharing your knowledge. Good leaders support their team and show them how to support each other.

FUN FACT

I was born in Alaska!
WOMEN’S HISTORY MONTH 2021

SPOTLIGHT: CUIMC WOMEN

Nafisa Osman

“"

NOMINATOR’S COMMENTS

She is a person that makes working at my department so much better. She is kind, positive, inspirational, hard working, and motivated. I have a great sense of pride to work with her by her side on a daily basis.

BEST ADVICE YOU HAVE RECEIVED

The keys to success are hard work, integrity, accountability, and teamwork. The how you achieved results is just as important as the results, so make it a point to empower, treat everyone with respect, and communicate effectively.

FUN FACT

I played in a charity softball tournament at Fenway Park in Boston.

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Multispecialty Practice Administrator
Faculty Practice Organization
WOMEN’S HISTORY MONTH 2021

SPOTLIGHT: CUIMC WOMEN

Jaimini Patel

Assistant Director, Revenue Cycle
Faculty Practice Organization
Revenue Management

NOMINATOR’S COMMENTS

Jaimy goes above and beyond to lead her team towards success. She consistently provides encouragement, as well as developmental opportunities for her team. She takes day-to-day tasks, in addition to projects with a positive attitude and strong work ethic.

BEST ADVICE YOU HAVE RECEIVED

The best career advice I received is to never forget your staff, strong and weak! Don’t allow fear of your team becoming better than you compromise your ability to lead and manage. Proof will be in the pudding when people start approaching your team members instead of you directly to resolve their issues.

FUN FACT

My day starts and ends with a fresh bean-to-cup coffee😊
WOMEN’S HISTORY MONTH 2021

SPOTLIGHT: CUIMC WOMEN

Angelic Pla

Manager of HR
CUIMC Facilities Management

NOMINATOR’S COMMENTS

I nominate Angelic because she just makes going to work so much better. We can talk about anything for hours whether it be podcasts we’ve listened to, current events, or the multiple new interests we started from the quarantine. She also pushes me to strive and improve myself. Without her, I would not have taken the first steps to apply for the Master’s program I am currently doing through Columbia.

BEST ADVICE YOU HAVE RECEIVED

Some know exactly what they want to be when they grow up and some will explore different roles. Either way growing is a journey - remember to enjoy it and create joy along the way.

FUN FACT

I recently joined a band.
Shanaz Pershad

Executive Assistant to CHRO
CUIMC HR

WOMEN’S HISTORY MONTH 2021

SPOTLIGHT: CUIMC WOMEN

Shanaz is a ray of sunshine everyday. She always greets with a smile and is unceasingly positive and optimistic. Her positivity is contagious.

Don’t ever say ‘I don’t know’; instead say ‘I will try my best to get an answer or find a solution.

I am one of Michael Jackson’s biggest fan.

BEST ADVICE YOU HAVE RECEIVED

FUN FACT

NOMINATOR’S COMMENTS
Tonya Richards

Sr. Human Resources Business Partner
Chief Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Officer
CUIMC HR

**NOMINATOR’S COMMENTS**

Tonya has a full plate at CUIMC and in her personal life but seems to execute all with ease and grace. We are so happy to have her at CUIMC and she inspires me every day.

**BEST ADVICE YOU HAVE RECEIVED**

The best advice I received several years ago was the concept of ‘restless excellence’ this means that we should try to continuously improve tomorrow from where we are today.

**FUN FACT**

People are always surprised to learn that I trained in martial arts and also like to knit/crochet in my spare time. Also, in May 2020, I had a virtual public live conversation with Oprah.
WOMEN’S HISTORY MONTH 2021

SPOTLIGHT: CUIMC WOMEN

Jacqueline Rodriguez

Customer Service Supervisor
Clinical Revenue Office (CRO)
Faculty Practice Organization

“Mrs. Jackie is patience in explaining things, she provides inspirational morning messages to get the team motivated and she provides updates on the dept. changes and updates once she get awareness of them.”

BEST ADVICE YOU HAVE RECEIVED

Simply put, your team is a reflection of you and your leadership. Make sure they represent you and themselves well. Show up every day and show your team that you’re willing to roll up your sleeves and get in there with them. I was very fortunate to have been mentored by two amazing women who saw my potential and took me under their wings. For me, they were true leaders because they were transparent with their staff. They did not demand respect from their teams, they earned their respect and because of that their teams were willing to go the extra mile when needed. This is what I took with me when I was hired at Columbia. I work with a great group of individuals and couldn’t ask for a better team.

FUN FACT

I love to bake! Baking was something my mother and I did when I was a child and it stayed with me through adulthood. I love to bake cakes, cookies, cheesecakes, you name it.
Jasmin Rodriguez

Float Pool Program Coordinator
Service Corporation/CUIMC

WOMEN’S HISTORY MONTH 2021

SPOTLIGHT: CUIMC WOMEN

NOMINATOR’S COMMENTS

“I would not be as happy to be a CUIMC employee if it wasn’t for the support and compassion Jasmin provided me as new employee.”

BEST ADVICE YOU HAVE RECEIVED

1. Don’t be afraid to shine in your own light.
2. Not everyone has your same work ethic and that’s ok.
3. Know when to take a step back, you can’t fight every battle.

FUN FACT

“I have a Shih Tzu named Miister. I love to dress him up as an Ewok. I am also obsessed with succulents and photography”
Yojahira Rosado

Yojahira treats everyone equally. She listens to you and always provides her best advice.

Work hard, with a good attitude and always persevere.

I love to sing!

Administrative Coordinator
Department of Surgery
Judith Ruiz

Executive Director, Administration & HR
61st Street Service Corporation

NOMINATOR’S COMMENTS

It is inspiring to work for someone who is passionate about her work and remembers to inspire others to go above and beyond to achieve their personal and professional goals.

BEST ADVICE YOU HAVE RECEIVED

Always show up, be prepared, and make relationships

FUN FACT

I am a huge Elvis Presley fan. I love his movies and songs. I wish to visit Graceland some day.
Dionida Ryce

Assistant Vice President of Faculty Affairs
CUIMC OFA

SPOTLIGHT: CUIMC WOMEN

WOMEN’S HISTORY MONTH 2021

NOMINATOR’S COMMENTS

D. Ryce is an influential and astute leader. She is a great role model and is passionate about attaining equity for all and fostering an inclusive work environment.

BEST ADVICE YOU HAVE RECEIVED

Always keep the big picture in mind; focus on the institution’s mission and the part that I play. When faced with challenges, competing demands and the need to manage risks, knowing my purpose always leads me to make the right decision.

FUN FACT

I am a marathon maniac who has completed a full marathon race in each of the 50 states and in three continents thus far. I am also an aspiring Ironman triathlete.
Jingjing Shang, PhD, RN, OCN, FAAN

**Professor of Nursing**
Columbia University Irving Medical Center

**NOMINATOR’S COMMENTS**
As principal investigator, Jingjing has been a caring and tireless leader of the research study, Infection Prevention in Home Healthcare (InHOME), during the COVID-19 pandemic. While the past year has been difficult, seeing her work ethic, as well as her optimism, inspired me and boosted my morale.

**BEST ADVICE YOU HAVE RECEIVED**
Life’s a marathon, not a sprint. Be resilient!

**FUN FACT**
Enjoy jogging/running. I have jogged for 1100 miles since last March when I started working from home.
Ellen Spilker

Executive Director
P&S EDU Financial Aid

WOMEN’S HISTORY MONTH 2021

SPOTLIGHT: CUIMC WOMEN

Ellen has been with the University and at VP&S since 1979. She has always put the need of the students above all else, and to this end continues to push for equity in meeting the financing needs of all of our students. She is always available to counsel and find workable solutions whether it be professional or personal. This would be a well deserved honor.

BEST ADVICE YOU HAVE RECEIVED

The best professional advice I’ve received is ‘edit, edit, edit!’

FUN FACT

People say I look serious when they first meet me, but they come to find out I can be quite silly. Also, I love to watch Jeopardy, and play word games.
Patrice Spitalnik, M.D.

Professor of Pathology & Cell Biology
Pathology Department

NOMINATOR’S COMMENTS
Dr. Spitalnik has been a rock throughout the pandemic. She makes herself available 24/7, and has organized ways to stay connected and to stay supportive of the students. The is always the first to try and solve a problem or offer a positive remark.

BEST ADVICE YOU HAVE RECEIVED
When giving a talk, be sure to stop talking before the audience stops listening. This also works for personal interactions.

FUN FACT
I met my husband in elementary school and we are now both faculty members at Columbia.
Anne L. Taylor, M.D

Vice Dean, Academic Affairs
SVP, Faculty Affairs and Career Development
Columbia University Irving Medical Center

NOMINATOR’S COMMENTS

Dr. Taylor is an amazing and inspirational force to all of those who work with her. She has truly transformed the institution with her new initiatives in faculty development and has worked tirelessly to develop policies, guidelines, and principles to make CUIMC a more equitable and inclusive place for women and underrepresented minority faculty alike. She is a nationally recognized expert on mentoring and with the creation of the Virginia Kneeland Frantz Society for Women Faculty and the new VP&S for Women and Diverse Faculty, faculty now have a place that support them across lines of gender, race/ethnicity, sexuality and religion. She is also personally an inherently and consistently good-humored, optimistic, passionate, thoughtful and enthusiastic person which is all contagious to those around her. She is an incredible inspiration to her staff and the faculty with whom she works.

BEST ADVICE YOU HAVE RECEIVED

When I was about 16 or 17 a wonderful cello teacher commented to me “Anna, you cannot play beautifully without playing with courage”. At the time, I thought it was a good music lesson, but over time I have come to realize that it is as important a life lesson!!

FUN FACT

My piano teacher fired me for insubordination when I was 11!!!
Vivian Taylor, Ed.D.

Associate Dean, Diversity and Cultural Affairs
Columbia University School of Nursing

WOMEN’S HISTORY MONTH 2021

SPOTLIGHT: CUIMC WOMEN

NOMINATOR’S COMMENTS

Dr. Taylor leads by example and always inspires her staff. Her passion for what she does at the school of nursing is undeniable and the impact of her work has gone beyond the school and even the medical center. She continues to be a leader for racial equity and dismantling systematic inequalities.

BEST ADVICE YOU HAVE RECEIVED

I have received three pieces of great advice over the years. One is to remember that when I am overwhelmed, to stop, take deep breaths, and tackle one problem or issue at a time. Secondly, to choose my battles carefully because I will not be able to win every battle. And thirdly, to be kind. Kindness is deeply under-rated in the world but can serve to expedite strong and lasting work relationships.

FUN FACT

I find cooking to be therapeutic and I like to observe reactions of individuals as they take the first bite of food that I have prepared.
WOMEN’S HISTORY MONTH 2021

SPOTLIGHT: CUIMC WOMEN

Santia Valerio

Project Manager, Capital Project Mgt. Facilities Management

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NOMINATOR’S COMMENTS

Santia inspires her coworkers to be inclusive during social events. She recently showed us a presentation for black history month which included important Black historical figures achievements and resources like books, movies and local black owned businesses.

BEST ADVICE YOU HAVE RECEIVED

Keep an open mind and remember your inbox will be full when you are dead.

FUN FACT

I am a Dancing Queen. I started tap dancing at the age of 3"
Sonia Walton-Kemp

Manager
Float Pool Program
Service Corporation

SPOTLIGHT: CUIMC WOMEN

WOMEN’S HISTORY MONTH 2021

Sonia has been amazing in her position recruiting and managing well over 100 staff members during her tenure. Sonia is an excellent mentor for her "floaters" always coaching and encouraging them in their endeavors. Sonia brings acceptance, empathy, and genuine care to work, every day. Her attitude inspires me to be a positive force in the workplace, like her. Sonia is a compassionate woman who always sees the good in others.

BEST ADVICE YOU HAVE RECEIVED

Find out what you like doing best and get someone to pay you for doing it. Be confident, yet humble.

FUN FACT

I love babies, anybody’s baby. It’s almost an obsession. I will can see a baby on the street and just want to approach the parent to ask can I hold your baby please? I’ve done this. I just have a thing for babies- I always have. 😊
WOMEN’S HISTORY MONTH 2021

SPOTLIGHT: CUIMC WOMEN

Darlene Wilson

Medical Receptionist
Obstetrics & Gynecology

“”

NOMINATOR’S COMMENTS

Darlene is our positive go-to person at HIP 4. She goes above and beyond for her co-workers and all of our patients. She is amazing and deserves this recognition.

BEST ADVICE YOU HAVE RECEIVED

Always try to come to work with a positive attitude, give the patients and the people you work with your best. Smile even when you don’t feel like it.

FUN FACT

I love The Color Purple and I love to sing and mess up the songs. I also like to give my co-workers new names.

“”
Tyeast Wofford

Patient Accounts Lead Representative
Clinical Revenue Office (CRO)
Faculty Practice Organization

NOMINATOR’S COMMENTS

Tyeast is a great trainer, cool and has an awesome demeanor. She is hardworking, fun and one of a kind. I know her long enough to know she is valuable and deserves this recognition.

BEST ADVICE YOU HAVE RECEIVED

Embrace failure, while searching for the value in criticism and work harder than everyone around you.

FUN FACT

People think that I am a serious person but when I am with my family and friends, I am a total goofy girl and I Love every Disney princess.
Judy Wolfe, Ed.D.

Associate Dean | Student Affairs
Columbia University | School of Nursing

WOMEN’S HISTORY MONTH 2021

SPOTLIGHT: CUIMC WOMEN

NOMINATOR’S COMMENTS

Judy is a true advocate for her students. Judy uses her resources with other university stakeholders when it comes to supporting student success.

BEST ADVICE YOU HAVE RECEIVED

I attended a seminar with Carla Harris, Vice Chairperson at Morgan Stanley, in which she talked about the importance of “relationship currency” and “sponsorship”. I have never forgotten that advice. Basically she said, it is important to know everyone above or below you in your organization and for them to know you. Once you engage these people and connect with them you build relationships. Once you have a relationship, they will be willing to serve as “sponsors”. Sponsors are able to share your hard work and skills sets with others in meetings where you are being discussed but are not there to represent yourself. I truly believe that building relationships is crucial to your ability to grow in your field.

FUN FACT

I am a huge Criminal Minds fan, Dr. Reid is my favorite character.
Michelle Yuan

Clinical Research Coordinator
Department of Surgery

NOMINATOR’S COMMENTS

Michelle is such a role model and force to be reckoned with. She is hard-working, dedicated, and very team-oriented. She’s always willing to go out of her way to help out a co-worker or a friend. She works hard—staying late and coming early, even working on weekends when necessary—but she also understands work-life balance and enjoys her time off. She is always willing to step up in an emergency. She is one of the most reliable and dependable people I’ve ever had the pleasure of working with and knowing.

BEST ADVICE YOU HAVE RECEIVED

People like you more when you bring bagels! And don’t forget to add a little humor where you can.

FUN FACT

I love to travel and was lucky enough to be able to visit 25 countries by age 25.