

Our Honored Secretary

She is a person of grace and poise, even under pressure, and she is the consummate professional, dispatching her responsibilities in a quiet but effective manner. She makes those she encounters – whether co-workers or guests from outside the company – feel at-ease and important.

She is Melissa Gaylor, and she is the Secretary of the Day for Life Care at corporate. The honor was bestowed on her Wednesday at the annual breakfast honoring administrative professionals. Terry Leonard, her supervisor and senior vice president for Information Technology, walked Melissa down the aisle on a red carpet when her name was announced. He presented her with red roses, and she received a tiara from Kelly Wilcoxon, executive secretary in the president's office.



Secretary of the Day Melissa Gaylor shares the moment with (L to R) President Beecher Hunter; surprise guest, daughter Lauren; and her supervisor, CIO Terry Leonard.

Theme for the day and the week observed by the International Association of Administrative Professionals is *Admins, the Pulse of the Office*. Wednesday marked the 60th anniversary of this special celebration, previously called Professional Secretaries Week and Professional Secretaries Day. The name was changed to Administrative Professionals Week and Administrative Professionals Day in 2000.

In his nomination, Leonard said, "During her 12-year tenure with Life Care, Melissa has held numerous positions in various areas of our corporate headquarters. Due to her progression, she has a tremendous institutional knowledge of our corporate operations. She has been very effective in our corporate Human Resources department, Legal department, the president's office and the chairman's office before coming to IT three years ago. In addition to having great administrative skills and an unsurpassed work ethic, her knowledge of our corporate function is irreplaceable."

Melissa "understands the critical nature of customer support, as the IT department takes 10,000 support calls per month from our facilities," Leonard said. "She often takes direct calls from associates in need of help and she patiently gets them to the right support group."

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He praised her for being a “dedicated and devoted supporter of our corporate United Way efforts ... and the sole keeper of our pledge database. Above all else, I want to commend and thank Melissa for help with that which is most precious to me, our IT associates. It’s like a large extended family of geeks here in IT, and Melissa helps keep the personal issues at the forefront. I can always count on her to be closer to personal and family issues and help direct me to where I need to be.”

In an interview later, Melissa was asked about the commonality among all the departments in which she has worked. “The biggest thing to me was that I had great bosses and co-workers who helped mold me into the person I am today,” she said. “When I first came to Life Care, I was so backwards and shy and had very little self-confidence. Having worked with so many great people and in so many different areas of the company has helped me to grow as a person and to have a better understanding of the entire company, and to appreciate all the various diversities among people. I’ve learned that it takes each one of us working as a team to be successful. I am so thankful that God led me to Life Care and blessed me with such wonderful people to work with.”

The breakfast program also recognized division executive secretaries who came to participate, including Robyn Maynard, Mountain States; Kim Ready, Heartland; Ann Boyd, Northeast; Veronica Hamrick, Southeast; LaRue Lahvic, Southwest; Elaine Wright, Central; Heather Omega, Northwest; and Candice Hooker, Eastern.

We are proud of our secretaries – their talents, their positive attitudes, their customer service – and the contributions they make every day to the success of our company.

– Beecher Hunter