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ELM STORIES

School of Social Work's Canapp Named 2023 UMB Employee of the Year

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The James T. Hill Scholarship recipient, Community Service Award winner, and long-serving staff members also are honored at the annual Employee Recognition and Service Awards Luncheon.

Photo: Jen Canapp show her surprise after hearing she had been selected as the 2023 UMB Cecil S. Kelly Memorial Employee of the Year.

Jen Canapp is affectionately known to many students as the “PhD mom” of the University of Maryland School of Social Work (UMSSW). On April 15, she received another title, this one from the University of Maryland, Baltimore (UMB): 2023 Cecil S. Kelly Memorial Employee of the Year.



Canapp, academic services specialist for the PhD program at UMSSW, was honored during UMB's Employee Recognition and Service Awards Luncheon at Westminster Hall. The annual event also recognizes the James T. Hill Scholarship recipient, Community Service Award winner, and longtime employees who in 2023 reached service milestones in five-year increments between 20 and 50 years.

(See a photo gallery below and watch a video about the event [on YouTube](#).)

Canapp was chosen Employee of the Year from a group of 12 nominees who were selected as Employees of the Month in 2023. UMB President Bruce E. Jarrell, MD, FACS, announced Canapp as the winner, then Malika S. Monger, MPA, PHR, chief human resources officer and associate vice president, read quotes from UMSSW colleagues about her, including:

- *“Jen is consistently reliable, collegial, and helpful. Countless PhD students have told me that Jen was the reason they have made it through the PhD program.”*
- *“Jen responds to everyone — our students, staff, visitors, dignitaries, faculty, etc. — with kindness, caring, grace, respect, empathy, and positivity.”*
- *“She routinely goes above and beyond the limits of her job description to make sure that everyone is doing OK.”*

Canapp has picked up international students at the airport, helped them navigate the Social Security Administration office, and even made them sweets and goodies when they had to quarantine after a flight because of the COVID-19 pandemic. She supports about 40 PhD students, helping them from the time they apply to the program to the time they graduate.

“I am shocked but very touched to be named Employee of the Year,” Canapp said. “It meant a lot to hear the reasons why I was nominated, and it means a lot to me because I love my job. It’s just incredible to be recognized with all the other nominees and all the people who are here today. To know that the people I work with and the people that I work for appreciate me, it just makes me feel wonderful.”

The Employee of the Year Award, which comes with a \$1,500 bonus, is presented to an employee who exemplifies the qualities of service, humanity, and commitment that Kelly exhibited during his career on UMB's facilities staff from 1966 to 1989.

([Read more](#) about Canapp.)

James T. Hill Scholarship

Ashley Davis, MSN, CARN-AP, FNP-C, nurse practitioner, Research Initiative for Infectious Diseases and Substance Use (RIIS), Institute of Human Virology, University of Maryland School of Medicine (UMSOM), received the James T. Hill Scholarship.

The \$2,000 scholarship was established to support UMB's commitment to staff development in recognition of Hill's long and outstanding service to the University as well as his personal commitment to the professional development of fellow employees until he retired in 2009. Jarrell took time to talk about Hill, who died in March at age 81, remembering him as a “champion of UMB and certainly a champion of our employees.”

Davis has worked for nearly five years on the RIIS team, whose primary research objective is to explore the intersection of infectious diseases and substance use in marginalized populations with the goal of eliminating health disparities.

“As a RIIS nurse practitioner, I explore these high-risk populations and barriers to care, while assessing and implementing patient-centered interventions to improve delivery of care and facilitate translational research in conjunction with clinical work,” Davis said.

During her time at UMB, Davis has worked to continue her professional development to improve the care she provides to patients. She has received Certified Addictions Registered Advanced Practice certification and become credentialed as an HIV specialist through the American Academy of HIV Medicine. In 2023, she was selected to present an abstract and poster to the American Society of Addiction Medicine Conference and was selected to be in the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services/American Nurses Association Minority Fellow Program.

In addition to working at UMB, Davis is a student in the Doctor of Nursing Practice Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner specialty at the University of Maryland School of Nursing.

“Obtaining a doctoral degree is not easy, it’s not cheap, and I feel fortunate that my team at UMB has supported me,” Davis said. “To have this additional recognition that also comes with money to go toward tuition, I just feel really grateful. This scholarship will greatly help me achieve my goal of becoming a doctoral-prepared psychiatric mental health nurse practitioner.”

Community Service Award

Jerome Robinson, maintenance mechanic lead, Parking and Transportation Services, received the Community Service Award, which recognizes a UMB employee who is active in local community service organizations or has a long history of service on the local, national, or international levels.

Robinson, a 23-year UMB employee, “goes above and beyond most employees by providing community service to the surrounding neighborhoods,” said Robert Milner, MS, CAPP, executive director, Auxiliary Services. “He has made feeding and clothing the homeless in the Baltimore region a priority for the last four years.”

In addition to food drives, Robinson has helped organize annual school supply drives for local students, clothing drives, and a toy drive in December.

“Jerome knows the importance of community engagement and helping those less fortunate,” Milner said. “He has been very humble in his giving and never asks for recognition for the work that he does.”

Said Robinson: “I’ve been in downtown Baltimore for 47 years and on this campus for a long time, so I see the homeless who need help and that there are many people in need. I just try to help out where I can and just lend my hand to the community.”

(To donate to Robinson’s community engagement efforts, email Jerome.Robinson@umaryland.edu.)

Long-Term Service

Monger introduced the service milestone employee groups by reading trivia from the year the staff members had started at UMB and noted that the 97 honorees had a combined 2,460 years of working at the University. That list included one employee, Cyndi Rice of Academic Affairs, who was celebrating 45 years at UMB, and well as two 50-year employees, Lu Ann Marshall of the University of Maryland Francis King Carey School of Law and Bruce Steffe of UMB Administration and Finance.

Monger also recognized the four employees who are nominated for University System of Maryland (USM) Board of Regents Staff Awards, the highest honor bestowed by the board for the achievements of exempt and nonexempt staff employees from institutions within USM: LaToya Bates, UMSOM; Mary Beth Nibley, UMB Office of Philanthropy; Emily Paterson, University of Maryland School of Pharmacy; and Dana Rampolla, UMB Office of Communications and Public Affairs. The USM Staff Award winners will be announced later this spring.

Jarrell thanked all the honorees for their service, noting that there is great value in the deep institutional knowledge they provide to the University.

“It’s a remarkable accomplishment to serve UMB for so long, but it’s also a statement about what it really means to be committed to our mission,” he said. “And this event gives me a chance to say how much you all are appreciated and how important it is that you’ve stayed here and that you’ve lent your expertise, your talent, and your skills to make UMB operate so well.”

Jen Badie contributed to this article.