

2017 HOSPITALITY AWARD WINNERS

Our first nominee highlights the meaning of hospitality by going above and beyond. He consistently receives positive comments from guests and has been named “Associate of the Month” a number of times. As one guest wrote about this bellman, “He made us feel very welcomed during our first visit and then again several years later when he remembered us. He even invited us to an Ethiopian meal. This was a great cultural learning experience and why we stay at the Hyatt Arlington.” The Arlington Chamber of Commerce is proud to name **Girja Alemu** of the **Hyatt Centric Arlington Hotel** a 2017 Hospitality Superstar.

This next nominee demonstrates consistent dependability, reliability, and commitment to high standards. She has stepped into every role in the housekeeping department, including houseman and lobby worker, while always keeping a smile on her face. She is ready and willing to drop whatever she is doing to assist guests and workers in need. She is an excellent communicator and an asset to the hotel. The Arlington Chamber of Commerce is proud to name **Nohemy Amaya** of the **Crystal City Marriott at Reagan National Airport** a 2017 Hospitality Superstar.

The next nominee consistently goes above and beyond for guests and associates. A guest was so happy with the nominee's work ethic and care given to the team members traveling with her, that the guest relocated her business to the Arlington market. This guest has cited our nominee's excellent level of customer service for what keeps her coming back. The Arlington Chamber of Commerce is proud to name **Zemenaye Debebe** of the **Residence Inn Arlington Capital View** a 2017 Hospitality Superstar.

The next nominee is very responsive to the needs of guests and his fellow associates. He takes pride in his work and it shows in the results. He is also a true professional that never says no and is always going above and beyond for the

hotel and guests. A great example of his true professionalism was shown when he heard that the housekeepers did not have a sufficient number of working vacuum cleaners. Without being asked, he took it upon himself to piece the broken vacuum cleaners together to salvage as many as possible, so the very grateful housekeepers would have working vacuums to do their job and provide clean fresh rooms for guests. When he saw that the Associate Resource room was dirty and full of old furniture, he volunteered to remove all the old, worn furniture, which helped to make the room more welcoming for our hosts. He also takes great care of guests without any hesitation. One guest was once stranded in the hotel garage after leaving his keys in the car, when the nominee approached him to offer assistance and was able to help the guest get his car unlocked. The Arlington Chamber of Commerce is proud to name **Wilber Moreira** of the **Crystal Gateway Marriott** a 2017 Hospitality Superstar.

The next nominee has received more name recognition in the Guest Satisfaction Survey than any other associate during the last year and continues to receive outstanding feedback from guests. He takes pride in providing top-notch service and acting as a wonderful host to the hotel guests. In just his first year, he has already been promoted to a PM server in the bar and grill. The Arlington Chamber of Commerce is proud to name **Purna Shahi** of the **Key Bridge Marriott** a 2017 Hospitality Superstar.

Our next nominee is an outstanding employee with billing and problem-solving expertise. The managers all look to her for assistance with issues that arise, and she can fix any problem that comes up with guests. She has been in Arlington for less than two years and has already been named “Employee of the Month.” The Arlington Chamber of Commerce is proud to name **Roman Abraham** of the **Renaissance Arlington Capital View Hotel** a 2017 Hospitality Superstar.

The next nominee’s dedication to her work shines through on a daily basis, and in critical circumstances. In one particular incident, a guest called housekeeping for a seamstress because her dress needed immediate repair. Our nominee – who

happened to be a seamstress - answered the guest's call then went shopping for the necessary tools and arrived to the guest's room before her shift to repair the dress. The guest was blown away by her kind gesture and unparalleled service. The Arlington Chamber of Commerce is proud to name **Karina Romero** of the **Hyatt Regency Crystal City at Reagan National Airport** a 2017 Hospitality Award Superstar.

Our next nominee's passion and dedication to her job is exemplary. She comes to work prepared, has a can-do attitude, and always makes sure to take extra special care of every customers' needs. She loves giving surprises to guests in the morning, such as finding out the tour group contact's favorite drink and making sure it is ready first thing in the morning. She is dependable, valuable team player, helping other departments take care of their guests. The Arlington Chamber of Commerce is proud to name **Tsehay Yohannes** of the **Crystal City Marriott at Reagan National Airport** a 2017 Hospitality Superstar.

This next nominee's reputation precedes him. As his manager says, "Who needs Superman when you have him? He will do anything to make things happen for both our guests and our team." He helped with a remodeling project and worked all weekend to ensure the coffee shop opened on time Monday morning. He plans ahead and goes above and beyond every day, working long hours, training new team members, and assisting others during busy times. He is also fluent in French and Italian and helps with translations. The Arlington Chamber of Commerce is proud to name **Komi Assogba** of **Crowne Plaza Washington National Airport** a 2017 Hospitality Superstar.

The next nominee is a server who always goes the extra mile to be personable and hospitable to every hotel guest during their stay. This past year, a family of four staying at the hotel could not have a filling breakfast at the restaurant buffet, because they were all vegetarians. The family stayed at the hotel for a full week, and on a number of occasions, this nominee went to the grocery store to buy

vegetarian food for the entire family. He always made sure that these guests had something that fit their vegetarian requirements for breakfast. The Arlington Chamber of Commerce is proud to name **Henri Rabezanahary** of the **Residence Inn by Marriott Arlington Ballston** a 2017 Hospitality Superstar.

This nominee demonstrates her commitment to guests and co-workers by the actions that she exhibits on a daily basis. She frequently volunteers to assist in multiple capacities within the hotel, while excelling in her current position of housekeeper. She often works late and comes to work on her days off to assist the team with accommodating guest requests. Most recently, during hotel renovations, she was readily available to assist the team in the capacity of Project Leader. She led the team as they removed all of the hotel-related goods from every room that was being prepared for renovation, and she ensured every room was set up properly, when the construction team released the rooms back to the hotel for guest occupancy. She displays a positive, “let’s make it happen” attitude, which is infectious to all around her. The Arlington Chamber of Commerce is proud to name **Olga Rodriguez** of the **Crystal Gateway Marriott** a 2017 Hospitality Superstar.

Our next nominee sets a fine example for all associates by shining the light and warmth of hospitality on every guest that enters the lounge. She remembers every guest upon their return to the hotel, even if she’s only met them once. Guests constantly rave about the difference she makes during their stay, taking a personal interest in them and that is one reason they return to the hotel. She is very responsible, is a great team player and makes her job look easy. The Arlington Chamber of Commerce is proud to name **Nidia Ziliox** of the **Hilton Arlington** a 2017 Hospitality Superstar.

As the first point of contact for a newly hired Executive Chef, this nominee helped the chef feel more welcome than any other person he had encountered by welcoming him to the team. Fast forward three years, and this nominee and the same chef are now at a different hotel, having been hired at different times. The chef said he was treated to the same level of hospitality that he was at the previous hotel and noted that the nominee, as the Lead Cook, is the glue that holds the kitchen together, and is someone he relies on every single day. The Arlington Chamber of Commerce is proud to name **William Bishay** of the **DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel Washington DC-Crystal City** a 2017 Hospitality Award Superstar.

The next nominee is the go-to person in the hotel. He is the floor man, carpet specialist, overnight attendant, and new hire trainer. Team members always ask for this outstanding employee who drives the shuttle to transport the guests or helps with large deliveries. He recently took on the challenge of processing linens overnight, which required immense labor. The Arlington Chamber of Commerce is proud to name **Robert Stewart** of the **Crowne Plaza Washington National Airport** a 2017 Hospitality Superstar.

This nominee is a problem solver, especially when meeting rooms needs to be set up. He takes time to check all the events the day before to prepare for success. He does a sweep of the rooms right after the program ends to make sure any items left behind can be returned in a timely fashion. His attention to detail is commendable. He is very proactive in finding a solution before it becomes a problem, and he is the go-to person of the event managers. His passion, dedication and loyalty to his job contribute to the success of his hotel. The Arlington Chamber of Commerce is proud to name **Romeo Ancanan** of the **Crystal City Marriott at Reagan National Airport** a 2017 Hospitality Superstar.

An important member of the team, our next nominee is always looking after the new ambassadors and willing to train incoming servers. She provides an extra set of eyes to ensure everything runs smoothly. In her free time, she calls on her family and friends to help her pick up and distribute used clothes to needy families. The Arlington Chamber of Commerce is proud to name ***Hiwot Semere*** of the **Renaissance Arlington Capital View Hotel** a 2017 Hospitality Superstar.

Our next nominee initiated an investigation to resolve a credit card fraud that occurred on the property. Without his persistence and commitment, the offender would have never been found. He partnered with the Arlington County Police Department, by giving them the report of his personal investigation, and, subsequently, the police were able to apprehend the perpetrator. The guest impacted was very appreciative of his efforts! This nominee is always ready to assist and engage the guests and for the past 18 years, has received numerous letters of appreciation for his service and commitment. He demonstrates each and every day that the spirit to serve comes from the heart. The Arlington Chamber of Commerce is proud to name ***Lloyd Hamilton*** of the **The Ritz-Carlton, Pentagon City** a 2017 Hospitality Superstar.

A front desk clerk, this nominee once voluntarily used his break to drive to another one of the hotel properties to pick up a wheel chair for a guest, because theirs was being used. This nominee was quick-thinking and took the initiative to ensure the guest had a wonderful stay. The Arlington Chamber of Commerce is proud to name ***Jordan Abbey*** of the **Holiday Inn Rosslyn** a 2017 Hospitality Superstar.

This next nominee's dedication was put to the test when a guest representative took a three-month leave of absence in the night audit operation, when the nominee had been at the hotel less than a year. Despite her short tenure, she was able to quickly learn the job, which requires her to be able to work and make

decisions in the absence of management, and has become a valuable member of the team. She took the opportunity to hone her leadership skills, as well as her technical acumen with computer processes, all the while filling an immediate void. Her impact and commitment are greatly appreciated by the guests, her fellow team members, and hotel management. The Arlington Chamber of Commerce is proud to name **Taylor Bentley** of the **Crystal Gateway Marriott** a 2017 Hospitality Superstar.

This nominee once came to work on her day off to help the housekeeping staff clean rooms. She saved the hotel thousands of dollars when the ironer was out during a storm and she had to deliver each individual sheet. She ran up and down the stairs to deliver the linens to the housekeepers. She is always smiling and willing to help others. The Arlington Chamber of Commerce is proud to name **Khadija Akansous** of the **DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel Washington DC-Crystal City** a 2017 Hospitality Superstar.

The next nominee is the heart and soul of the banquet kitchen. His tireless work and commitment to excellence has helped the hotel achieve high food quality scores over his six year tenure. He is the “ace in the hole” for the many cultural menus prepared for events. He takes great pride in producing dishes from his native Thailand, which are a huge hit with the guests and associates alike. His passion and care are noticed and very much appreciated. The Arlington Chamber of Commerce is proud to name **Narong Muangchan** of the **Renaissance Arlington Capital View Hotel** a 2017 Hospitality Superstar.

The next nominee knows what it means to go the extra mile. A guest from Italy contacted her ahead of their stay regarding the purchase of postage stamps. The nominee offered to buy the stamps for the guest ahead of time – until she found out the guest needed 700 stamps. She took it upon herself to call five different area post offices to ensure there were enough books of stamps for the guest to

purchase. She also arranged for an employee to transport the guest to the various locations. The guest was stunned by the care she provided for this unique request. The Arlington Chamber of Commerce is proud to name ***Maria Suyat*** of the **Hyatt Regency Crystal City at Reagan National Airport** a 2017 Hospitality Superstar.

The next nominee is a shining example of what this industry is all about in terms of making guests feel at home, even when they are often far from away from their own. On a consistent basis, her name is mentioned in guest satisfaction surveys not only her ability to perform her job, but also for her warm and engaging nature. In addition, she acts as excellent ambassador over the last 21 years, she has amassed a great deal of local area knowledge and is always happy to pass that knowledge on to those visiting the area. She is quick to break out one of the maps that she keeps on hand to help guests explore and discover all of the wonderful things Arlington has to offer. The Arlington Chamber of Commerce is proud to name ***Abonesh "Abby" Bedada*** of the **Crystal City Marriott at Reagan National Airport** a 2017 Hospitality Superstar.

Our next nominee is an outstanding example of a team member who embodies the hotel's values of hospitality, teamwork, and integrity. He is the go-to person for the managers when they need someone reliable to take care of VIP guests at the restaurant. He has an outgoing personality and his positive attitude rubs off on the other team members as well. Even in the most challenging of circumstances, he is always caring and understanding. And on many occasions, he has been able to diffuse tempers and handle guests at the bar in the utmost tactful manner. He also trains new team members and does an outstanding job of imparting his vast knowledge of the food and beverage items. The Arlington Chamber of Commerce is proud to name ***Mohammed Zouine*** of the **DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel Washington DC-Crystal City** a 2017 Hospitality Superstar.

This nominee always provides excellent service with a smile. He has worked many double shifts to cover for others, and when the hotel is short-staffed in banquets, he is always willing to help. He always goes above and beyond to provide top quality service to the guests and his co-workers. The Arlington Chamber of Commerce is proud to name **Heber Barrientos** of the **Holiday Inn Rosslyn** a 2017 Hospitality Superstar.

This next nominee is a newly-arrived laundry attendant and her presence in the housekeeping department has been a breath of fresh air. She truly cares about people and the community in which she lives and serves. Guest social interactions and the exchange of pleasantries are often part of her day, especially with the regulars. A frequent guest reported to the housekeeping manager that his partial denture was missing and that it may have fallen out during the night, possibly ending up between the sheets and removed from the room during the linen exchange. When asked by the housekeeping manager about the missing item, our nominee could have just said that nothing was seen or found – but that isn't her style. She went on a mission to find the denture through hundreds of dirty sheets, and after not finding it there, she sorted through all the garbage, which was already in the dumpsters. After a few hours of searching, her tenacity and zeal paid off, as she found the denture for her valued guest. This act of kindness exemplifies her extraordinary care and dedication. The Arlington Chamber of Commerce is proud to name **Jocelyn Jimenez** of the **Residence Inn by Marriott Arlington Ballston** a 2017 Hospitality Superstar.

Our next nominee comes can be counted on to arrive on time, ready to work, and always focused on his job. He often goes above and beyond to make sure guest needs and requests are met. Though it may not be his job, he will clean the guest suites if extra cleaning is needed. He cleans numerous suites on sold-out days, just to have the rooms ready to sell when needed. He is a reliable and valuable member of the staff. The Arlington Chamber of Commerce is proud to name **Abdellah Bouzid** of the **Residence Inn by Marriott Arlington Rosslyn** a 2017 Hospitality Superstar.

This next nominee always welcomes guests with a smile on her face. She knows the names of all the regular guests and always does her best to ensure that guests with dietary restrictions receive the special food items they require. When co-workers need assistance, she is there to help them with their tasks. The Arlington Chamber of Commerce is proud to name ***Meharite Sahlezghi*** of the **Residence Inn Arlington Capital View** a 2017 Hospitality Superstar.

Our next nominee is an ideal human resources professional. She genuinely cares about the associates, and does anything necessary to help them. From ensuring new associates are welcomed at orientation, to helping individuals going through a family loss, she is always available. Even in the most stressful situations, she always stops what she is doing if a fellow employee is in need. Her kind soul and spirit inspire everyone around her. The Arlington Chamber of Commerce is proud to name ***Laura Jennings*** of the **Renaissance Arlington Capital View Hotel** a 2017 Hospitality Superstar.

This next nominee had an extremely busy night one night with a large group at the restaurant and he took it upon himself to work two stations as one of the cooks was very new to the department. He showed the cook faster ways of preparing food and how to be more efficient with ticket accuracy. He talks to the guests in the restaurant as well as the concierge lounge to get feedback on their experiences. On another occasion, as he was going back to the kitchen, he found out that the morning shift would be short staffed so he volunteered to come in after having worked till midnight. He is incredibly dedicated to his job! The Arlington Chamber of Commerce is proud to name ***Jose (Armando) Rubio*** of the **Crystal City Marriott at Reagan National Airport** a 2017 Hospitality Superstar.

Our next nominee is a front desk agent who never fails to make guests feel welcome. He offers to work holidays, including Christmas, so the rest of the staff can be with their loved ones. He also is a great problem solver. Departing after a long stay at the hotel, one guest had some very large boxes that needed to be shipped, but the guest was running out of time. Our nominee offered to store the boxes on the hotel loading dock, made other staff aware of the situation, and scheduled the pickup on behalf of the guest. He even called on his day off to make sure the boxes had been picked up. He is very knowledgeable and makes guest feel very comfortable in Arlington, teaching them how to use public transportation and even how to download apps on their phones. The Arlington Chamber of Commerce is proud to name **Donald Leppla** of the **Residence Inn by Marriott Arlington Rosslyn** a 2017 Hospitality Superstar.

Our next nominee wears many hats at her hotel. Using her excellent communication skills, she is always willing to help out other departments. Aside from her normal duties in sales, she is always seeking new opportunities in Arlington for guests and employees alike. Often, she will send out notices about new companies coming to town, upcoming events, or other activities that may be of interest. This not only helps the hotel internally by managing the expected demand, but it also alerts the operations team so incoming guests can stay informed. In addition, she volunteers to on weekends to work the large special events, like the Marine Corps Marathon. She truly loves Arlington and takes it upon herself to learn as much as she can. She is a real asset to the hotel. The Arlington Chamber of Commerce is proud to name **Ellen Johnson** of the **DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel Washington DC-Crystal City** a 2017 Hospitality Superstar.

The next nominee demonstrates his commitment to guests and co-workers through his actions on a daily basis. He frequently volunteers to assist with completing cleaning projects in the hotel, while still fulfilling his daily duties. He is an ambassador of the hotel who greets every guest as they enter the building with a warm and hospitable smile. Recently, a guest that frequents the hotel approached him, commenting that he can tell the difference when the nominee is

not working, because when the nominee is on the job, there is an elevated level of care involved in cleaning the public space and greeting guests – a sentiment that is shared by dozens of guests and hotel staff alike. He displays a positive, “can do” attitude that is infectious to all around him. He is an asset to the housekeeping team as well as the hotel. The Arlington Chamber of Commerce is proud to name **Jose Campos** of the **Crystal Gateway Marriott** a 2017 Hospitality Superstar.

This next nominee leads by example, helping form the strong foundation of the gard man-ZHAY (garde manger) kitchen. Her punctuality and attendance are truly commendable. She is dedicated to her craft and is in the forefront to make sure the highest standards are met. She is a well-respected member of the gard man-ZHAY team and her dependable nature has won her high praise from other departments. The Arlington Chamber of Commerce is proud to name **Khin Lin** of **The Ritz-Carlton, Pentagon City** a 2017 Hospitality Superstar.

This nominee is the type of employee that you always want working in your hotel. She interacts very well with guests and makes everyone, including her co-workers, feel special. On many occasions, she helps guests start their day off on the right foot. In one instance, two children and their parents were coming for breakfast. She immediately started playing with the kids and kept them engaged when their parents were getting food. She spent nearly 20 minutes interacting with them and gave them coloring books. The parents were so impressed by the special treatment that they received, they asked her to come to their room at the end of her shift to babysit for couple hours that day. The Arlington Chamber of Commerce is proud to name **Maria Ester Alvarenga** of the **Residence Inn by Marriott Arlington Ballston** a 2017 Hospitality Superstar.

This next nominee is a willing assistant to his co-workers when they need additional help. He makes an extra effort to get all the linens ready, knowing how important it is for the linen to be picked up and delivered on time. On high

occupancy days, his hard work to execute this task is especially critical. He has excellent communication skills and is a valued employee. The Arlington Chamber of Commerce is proud to name **Fred Korli** of the **Residence Inn Arlington Capital View** a 2017 Hospitality Superstar.

As an accounting clerk, our next nominee does an outstanding job of taking care of invoices and improving the quality of the monthly financial statements. She is enthusiastic about learning and is always willing to help when needed. She gladly serves as the backup for payroll, general cashier, and the income audit. Because of her engaging personality, she is a tremendous ambassador for the department. She takes tremendous pride in her work and does whatever it takes to get the job done right. The Arlington Chamber of Commerce is proud to name **Kitty Lopez** of the **DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel Washington DC-Crystal City** a 2017 Hospitality Superstar.

This nominee takes exceptional care of her guests and is always willing to help others. She often comes to work on her day off to help out when the hotel is short-staffed. She is always smiling and has a positive, “can do” attitude. For over a year, she took care of a challenging guest, and while she was discouraged at times, she never gave up and did the best job she could. She is often complimented on her attention to detail and hospitable demeanor. The Arlington Chamber of Commerce is proud to name **Shashi Khadka Subedi** of the **Residence Inn by Marriott Arlington Rosslyn** a 2017 Hospitality Superstar.

The next nominee has gone above and beyond in providing caring service to the guests. As a server, she has taken special care of an elderly guest comes to the restaurant frequently. The guest swears that her mom is in the kitchen, and our nominee just comments that he knows her mom is preparing a delicious breakfast for her. Talk about creating a loving, family atmosphere. He embodies positivity and possesses a genuine sense of care for the well-being of others, as noted by

countless guests. The Arlington Chamber of Commerce is proud to name **Carlos Pineda** of the **Westin Arlington Gateway** a 2017 Hospitality Superstar.

This dedicated nominee is the epitome of professionalism and has the character that other people strive to emulate. He received recognition as the “Employee of the Quarter,” along with a number of other attendance awards. He is always tapped for his precision knife skills and knowledge of the Japanese cuisine. His perfect attendance and punctuality, along with his exemplary work ethic, make him an outstanding employee. The Arlington Chamber of Commerce is proud to name **Hiroshi Iwasaki** of **The Ritz-Carlton, Pentagon City** a 2017 Hospitality Superstar.

Our next nominee is a very reliable and flexible employee, who is completely focused on getting the job done. He works in the laundry but never hesitates to help a co-worker when he sees they are overwhelmed. He also works in housekeeping on very busy days. His flexibility and positive attitude make him the hotel’s Most Valuable Player. The Arlington Chamber of Commerce is proud to name **Masum Hossain** of the **Residence Inn by Marriott Arlington Rosslyn** a 2017 Hospitality Superstar.

For more than 14 years, our next nominee has been a valuable member of the hotel team. She is always willing to assist on special assignments, like getting show rooms ready for the owners or corporate. She also looks for clues to make each guest’s stay the best it can be. Her professionalism and knowledge are assets to the hotel. The Arlington Chamber of Commerce is proud to name **Wilhemina Doral** of the **Crystal City Marriott at Reagan National Airport** a 2017 Hospitality Superstar.

The next nominee is an outstanding example of dedicated service. This employee has never missed a day of work, provides excellent customer service, and has volunteered to assist in other restaurants on his days off. According to one of his customers, he is ever mindful of the sensitivity of working with the public in an environment where there is the potential for high stress on a daily basis. He is a dynamic leader with a demonstrated ability to effectively communicate with peers, subordinates, and seniors alike, and represents the name “McDonald’s” as quality. The Arlington Chamber of Commerce is proud to name **Wyatt D. Baldizon Campbell** of **McDonalds by Giaimo Management Corporation** a 2017 Hospitality Superstar.

Our next nominee volunteered to cook a special dessert that improved the variety of the food, as well as surprising the regular guests. She continually creates a warm and friendly atmosphere with children so they always feel welcomed. She has been named “Associate of the Month” many times and is an asset to her co-workers. The Arlington Chamber of Commerce is proud to name **Fatima Faraj** of the **Residence Inn Arlington Capital View** a 2017 Hospitality Superstar.

People come to the hotel restaurant just to see if this nominee is working. They are fascinated by her exceptional customer service and personal touch that she provides each and every time. She has been nominated and selected as “Employee of the Month” multiple times. She connects very quickly with her patrons and receives excellent reviews from them. She is an asset to the team and her restaurant feels very lucky to have her. The Arlington Chamber of Commerce is proud to name **Glenda Hernandez** of the **Renaissance Arlington Capital View Hotel** a 2017 Hospitality Superstar.

Our next nominee has a caring personality and lovely smile that makes guests and co-workers alike feel special at all times. She is always willing to help others and does her best to handle any issues that may arise. For example, an international

guest realized his money was not available when he arrived in the United States. After being unable to locate a Western Union so the guest could withdraw the needed funds, the nominee managed to find a place in DC and provided the guest with the information. Towards the end of her shift, she noticed the guest still there. He felt uncomfortable going into the city, so had not gotten any money. Our nominee offered this guest a cab service that took him to the location so he could get money and enjoy his vacation. The Arlington Chamber of Commerce is proud to name ***Betelehem Mengistu*** of the **Residence Inn by Marriott Arlington Rosslyn** a 2017 Hospitality Superstar.

This next nominee performs acts of kindness on a regular basis. A hotel employee became seriously ill when traveling out of the area and was out of work for two weeks with no family nearby. This nominee offered to pick her up and find someone to drive her car back to Virginia. Recently, a family checked in and our nominee overheard the father was recovering from cancer. The nominee arranged for the family to stay in the Presidential Suite, and even booked them a tour. A few months after their departure, the family informed the general manager that their father had passed away, and because the last trip they took together as a family was at The Ritz-Carlton, they promised to come back every year on vacation. This is all because of this nominee's kindness - he establishes a personal connection and creates guests for life. The Arlington Chamber of Commerce is proud to name ***Fayssal Samaka*** of the **The Ritz-Carlton, Pentagon City** a 2017 Hospitality Superstar.

This nominee is the example of a perfect housekeeper. The word "no" is not in her vocabulary, because whatever you ask of her, she completes in a timely way. The extended stay guests love her because she not only gives exemplary service, but she cares about them. The hotel feels very fortunate to have her in their employ. The Arlington Chamber of Commerce is proud to name ***Lourdes Marte*** of the **Residence Inn Arlington Capital View** a 2017 Hospitality Superstar.

Our next nominee takes enormous pride in her work and is always looking for ways to go above and beyond her responsibilities to take care of the guests. Her outstanding customer service was noted by a guest who was attending a meeting. The guest awoke extremely ill and called the front desk for a soda since the machine would not take coins, when our nominee answered the call and provided assistance. Full of gratitude, the guest later remarked, "She is one of the warmest people I have ever come across. She brought me the soda within five minutes, and two hours later, called to see how I was feeling." That is dedication to one's work! The Arlington Chamber of Commerce is proud to name **Bettie Thompson** of the **Crystal Gateway Marriott** a 2017 Hospitality Superstar.

This dependable nominee is very knowledgeable about the operations of her department and always makes sure the guests' needs are fulfilled. She is a handyman, in addition to being the hardworking inspector. A team player, she receives many positive comments from others, including another employee who was injured at work that the nominee took care of. The Arlington Chamber of Commerce is proud to name **Angel Harvey** of the **Residence Inn by Marriott Arlington Rosslyn** a 2017 Hospitality Superstar.

Our next nominee is an exceptional employee who has transitioned from the bell stand to Concierge to Doorman. He is a true gentleman and has excelled in all three of these positions, consistently performing to hotel standards. He is highly respected by his managers and colleagues, and well-loved by the guests that he has formed great relationships with, because he greets them by name and knows their preferences by heart. He understands what hospitality is all about and demonstrates that understanding every day. The Arlington Chamber of Commerce is proud to name **Landilino De la Rosa** of **The Ritz-Carlton, Pentagon City** a 2017 Hospitality Superstar.

This nominee has provided excellent service during his four years in the kitchen. A long time guest from Korea frequently visits the property. At each visit, our nominee makes sure to greet the gentleman and creates special dishes from the guest's Korean homeland. The guest is always so grateful for the hospitality and extra effort to create the dishes, so he can enjoy a sense of home on his travels. The Arlington Chamber of Commerce is proud to name **Danny Pyun** of the **Renaissance Arlington Capital View** a 2017 Hospitality Superstar.

An outstanding associate, our next nominee is a dedicated employee who makes it his mission to take care of all of the housekeepers' and guests' needs. He does his job very well, and if he should finish before the end of his shift, he always asks for extra duties to perform. He is professional, reliable, and a valued member of the team. The Arlington Chamber of Commerce is proud to name **Jorge Bernales** of the **Residence Inn Arlington Capital View** a 2017 Hospitality Superstar.

Being a breakfast attendant is not an easy job, but our next nominee makes it seem easy. Recently, a guest stated that she could not eat meat, so our nominee went straight to the kitchen and created a delicious, healthy salad option and made this guest extremely happy. This nominee is a team player as well, and has volunteered countless times to cover for other employees when they were sick. She always goes the extra mile to make sure the needs of the guests and co-workers are met. The Arlington Chamber of Commerce is proud to name **Maria Amaya** of the **Residence Inn by Marriott Arlington Rosslyn** a 2017 Hospitality Superstar.

For 17 years, this nominee has been willing to go above and beyond for hotel guests. Repeat guests always ask for him because he is very personable, charismatic, and caring. Recently, a group of people with disabilities stayed at the hotel. One man was having difficulty moving around the banquet space. The nominee took it upon himself to assist the man during his hotel stay, preparing his plate from the buffet and escorting him to the restroom and elevators to ensure

the guest would be comfortable throughout his stay. This nominee is a team player, as demonstrated by the buying and transporting of hay in the front seat of his new car so there would be enough for the hotel's Easter egg hunt, ensuring that the event would be a success. The Arlington Chamber of Commerce is proud to name **Mamadouh Bah** of **The Ritz-Carlton, Pentagon City** a 2017 Hospitality Superstar.

The next nominee has been involved in almost all facets of day-to-day operations, including opening the house, checking and cleaning rooms, assisting in the lobby, washing items, and maintaining inventory. She has trained three associates on opening the house. She has never received a request that she did not welcome with a smile and her positive, "can do" attitude. She has demonstrated the hunger to learn and be involved with the inner workings of the department. Her insightful ideas are depended on when problems arise. The Arlington Chamber of Commerce is proud to name **Yesenia Torres** of the **Renaissance Arlington Capital View Hotel** a 2017 Hospitality Superstar.

Our next nominee went out of her way to please a guest by cooking special meals because the guest did not eat pork. Over the course of the guest's three-night stay, our nominee prepared a delicious chicken dish and other non-pork entrees for her. She's so caring towards her colleagues that she volunteered to do makeup for the hotel's housekeepers during housekeeping week. She is always mentioned in hotel surveys because of her excellent work, her dedication shines in all she does. The Arlington Chamber of Commerce is proud to name **Yenny Lovo** of the **Residence Inn by Marriott Arlington Rosslyn** a 2017 Hospitality Superstar.

Our next nominee is credited with making guests loyal customers. Regarding this nominee's outstanding service, one guest wrote the following: "I spend most of my year in hotel rooms. I have even stayed in hotel chains where a butler is assigned to you to make your stay a bit more enjoyable, but not one of those hotels have gone above or beyond what our nominee did for me during my stay. I

came down with a severe cold and cough, and she not only cleaned my room around me, but surprised me late that day with a tray of hot tea, lemon, and honey. She did this without asking. She even checked up on me later to make sure I didn't need anything else. Today, she surprised me with a bowl of chicken broth, as she wanted me to eat something healthy. All this without asking! Superior customer service separates one hotel from another and her actions alone have made me a loyal customer." The Arlington Chamber of Commerce is proud to name **Viris Gayle** of **The Ritz-Carlton, Pentagon City** a 2017 Hospitality Superstar.

This nominee continually provides above and beyond service to guests and associates. Most noticeable is her work with two recurring guest groups. These groups can be high maintenance and constantly make changes to the room reservations, sending upwards of 20 adjustments per day, even on the day of arrival. This outstanding nominee continually coordinates with multiple departments in the hotel to ensure that all of their requirements are met and their stay is perfect. She is the main reason they continue using the hotel. The Arlington Chamber of Commerce is proud to name **Rachael Boldaji** of the **Residence Inn Arlington Capital View** a 2017 Hospitality Superstar.

Our next nominee's primary role as hostess is to smile, greet, seat, and answer telephones. However, she does so much more. Without being asked, she will help whoever is in need of assistance, whether it's a server who is behind on his or her tables, the coffee shop trying to deal with a rush, the concierge lounge needing assistance with guests, or even managers who need help ensuring tables are being "touched." She ensures procedures are being followed by all team members. On a weekly basis, she interacts with a guest who is having service issues at the hotel. Whether it is in her own department or another area of the hotel, she owns it and goes above and beyond to ensure that the guest leaves the hotel happy. She follows through every step of the way until the guest departs. The Arlington Chamber of Commerce is proud to name **Nina Pacheco** of the **Crystal Gateway Marriott** a 2017 Hospitality Superstar.

The next nominee is every restaurant manager's dream of a hostess. She follows standards and is passionate, dedicated, engaging, and team-oriented. She remembers every single guest's name, which automatically creates a memorable moment for guests. She cares for the guests as if they were in her own home and takes pride in making sure everyone who steps in the restaurant enjoys their experience. A guest referred to her as a great ambassador for the hotel. The Arlington Chamber of Commerce is proud to name **Danijela Vukovic** of **The Ritz-Carlton, Pentagon City** a 2017 Hospitality Superstar.

The next nominee is an 18-year veteran with an incredible work ethic. She is dependable, efficient, and an unfailingly punctual host. She loves the people she serves and consistently receives positive feedback and gratitude from groups in her section. She represents all the characteristics that are good in this hotel. The Arlington Chamber of Commerce is proud to name **Flor Cortez** of the **Crystal City Marriott at Reagan National Airport** a 2017 Hospitality Superstar.

This nominee is such an asset to the banquet department, because of his constant willingness to help his fellow ambassadors. He loves to serve guests and frequently completes tasks that need to be done without even being asked to do so. He is an excellent banquet server and the hotel could not do without him. The Arlington Chamber of Commerce is proud to name **Wegenie Chali** of the **Renaissance Arlington Capital View Hotel** a 2017 Hospitality Superstar.

Our next nominee makes sure every guest is satisfied with their hotel experience. A guest was checking into her suite, and discovered it was not set up to her standards. The nominee recommended that the guest grab dinner in the hotel restaurant, while he rectified the situation. By the completion of dinner, the suite was organized to the guest's specifications. A nice, handwritten note apologizing

for the inconvenience she experienced was left for the guest by the nominee. The guest was very satisfied and had a complete shift in demeanor. The Arlington Chamber of Commerce is proud to name ***Yohannes Mehari*** of the **Residence Inn by Marriott Arlington Rosslyn** a 2017 Hospitality Superstar.

Providing excellent customer service is what this next nominee does on a daily basis. He refers to the bar where he works as his office, and when he arrives on the property, he is committed to make everyone he encounters have a better day. Hotel guests have commented that they eat at the bar because it is so inviting and that he is a real pro. He is passionate, knowledgeable, innovative, sincere, and hardworking. He works well with his co-workers and connects with guests in an outstanding way. He has received a great deal of positive feedback about his excellent service and is a true asset. The Arlington Chamber of Commerce is proud to name ***Robert Taylor*** of **The Ritz-Carlton, Pentagon City** a 2017 Hospitality Superstar.

Our last nominee exemplifies teamwork. As a housekeeping aide, he is responsible for assisting every housekeeper in any way possible to deliver a memorable guest experience, as well as maintain the cleanliness of guest corridors, stairwells, elevators, and public space on the guestroom floors. It is a very demanding, fast-paced role, but he makes it look easy. His manager trusts and relies on him to identify special cleaning projects on his own and do whatever it takes to satisfy the guests by providing a clean hotel. He has a true “spirit to serve” and it shows in the genuine care that he displays towards his guests, co-workers, and the physical condition of the hotel itself. He often reports engineering issues in his work area to ensure that everything is in working order for guests. Our nominee takes deep pride in his work at the hotel, and it reflects in all that he does every day. The Arlington Chamber of Commerce is proud to name ***Jose “Hector” Reyes*** of the **Crystal Gateway Marriott** a 2017 Hospitality Superstar.

LEGENDARY SERVICE AWARDS (12)

Of all of the awards, some of the most inspiring are those given for legendary service for 25 years or more. Several years ago, the award was renamed The Bob Klein Legendary Service Award in honor of a late General Manager of the Holiday Inn National Airport/Crystal City, who was instrumental in creating the Hospitality Awards program and ensuring its success for the first five years.

The following are this year's Bob Klein Legendary Service Award Winners:

Our first Legendary Service Award winner has been an excellent housekeeper for 26 years. She has dedicated herself to providing the best service possible to the guests. She comes to work every day as enthusiastic as she was on her first day, and is the go-to person when others need help. She is dedicated to providing the best service possible to guests and always makes sure everything she does is perfect. She is always very friendly, helpful and professional. She also has the honor of cleaning the "show rooms" since her work is so top quality. The Arlington Chamber of Commerce is proud to name ***Ofelia Lopez*** of the **DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel Washington DC-Crystal City** a 2017 Bob Klein Legendary Service Award winner.

Our next Legendary Service Award winner has a "spirit to serve," as demonstrated by his commitment, dedication, and hard work for the past 26 years. As a linen attendant, this man works behind the scenes in one of the most important roles in the hotel. The quantity of linen available to guests daily is solely based on the amount of soiled linen he is able to distribute to the laundry. This legendary employee also provides service with a smile, interacting with guests and assisting with large functions when needed. He is caring, kind, and considerate as shown by the way he takes care of guests and co-workers. The Arlington Chamber of Commerce is proud to name ***Derrick Gaston*** of the **Crystal Gateway Marriott** a 2017 Bob Klein Legendary Service Award winner.

For 26 years, this Legendary Service Award winner has gone above and beyond on a daily basis. He graciously helps any and everyone who needs his assistance. As the lead cook, he is responsible for every breakfast, and he prepares the lunch for banquets and the soups and sauces for the restaurant menu. He has also assisted at night as a server. Never complaining, he always takes on every task given to him with a smile. The Arlington Chamber of Commerce is proud to name **Jose De La Cruz** of the **Crystal City Marriott at Reagan National Airport** a 2017 Bob Klein Legendary Service Award winner.

Our next Legendary Service Award winner has an infectious smile and hospitable demeanor. Over the last 30 years, she has shown her passion and willingness to go above and beyond to ensure that an exceptional experience is had by every guest that enters the hotel. Because of her extraordinary work ethic and dedication to her job, she worked her way from housekeeper to lobby attendant. She is considered a role model among her peers. The Arlington Chamber of Commerce is proud to name **Marina Rodriguez** of the **Crystal Gateway Marriott** a 2017 Bob Klein Legendary Service Award winner.

Professional, hardworking, and positive describe our next Legendary Service Award winner. For 32 years, she has worked as an extraordinary housekeeper. She is a team player and works hard every day to ensure the guests enjoy their hotel experience. The Arlington Chamber of Commerce is proud to name **Ana Quintanilla** of the **Holiday Inn Rosslyn** a 2017 Bob Klein Legendary Service Award winner.

Our next Legendary Service Award winner is a jack of all trades, known for his positive attitude and willingness to help however needed. He has provided outstanding service daily for both guests and associates for the past 32 years. Proficiency in many of the operational systems has made him the go-to guy for

questions and troubleshooting. He never says no, regardless of how busy he is. His tireless efforts are appreciated greatly by his co-workers. The Arlington Chamber of Commerce is proud to name **Michael Lee** of the **Renaissance Arlington Capital View Hotel** a 2017 Bob Klein Legendary Service Award winner.

The next Legendary Service Award winner has been committed to completing a job well done for the last 34 years. As a food and beverage server, she her dedication and contagious personality shine through her work. She has helped set a standard that all team members would be smart to follow. With her smile always on display, her hotel is thankful to have her as a member of the team. The Arlington Chamber of Commerce is proud to name **Mary Fon** of the **Holiday Inn Rosslyn** a 2017 Bob Klein Legendary Service Award winner.

The next Legendary Service Award winner has worked at his hotel for the last 35 years doing whatever it takes to make the guests happy and satisfied. A shining example of this is the service he has provided to a long term guest. He first met this guest and her boyfriend, a United States Veteran, 20 years ago. They were regular guests at the hotel who attended the annual Veterans of Foreign Wars functions. Through the years, the nominee moved up in the hotel to the Reservation Department, where he currently works, but the guest and her boyfriend remained in constant contact with him. Several years ago, the guest's boyfriend passed away, but she continued to attend the VFW functions in the area and stayed at the hotel each time. She would contact the nominee prior to her arrival, and he would go out of his way to take care of her reservation, including ensuring that she would be able to stay in the room where she always stayed. He also would make sure that she had a refrigerator for her medication and would follow up to make sure her stay was perfect. His dedication to the guest 20 years ago has ensured she would return every year to a perfect stay. The Arlington Chamber of Commerce is proud to name **Tommy Ellis** of the **Hyatt Regency Crystal City at Reagan National Airport** a 2017 Bob Klein Legendary Service Award winner.

Our next Legendary Service Award winner has impressed her entire team immensely, not only by her extensive knowledge, but with the dedication and care she has for her team. Her professionalism and 38 years of loyalty to the hotel is extraordinary. She is diligent, self-motivated, and has been a source of inspiration for the rest of her team. She always maintains a positive attitude, no matter what comes her way, and there has never been a day that she does not have a smile on her face. Not only does she go above and beyond in her daily responsibilities, but she is a key player for other departments and everyone knows they can come to her for help with anything. Even now, she still continues to look for new challenges. She truly makes working with her a fun and pleasant experience. The Arlington Chamber of Commerce is proud to name **JoAnn Jansen** of the **Holiday Inn National Airport/Crystal City** a 2017 Bob Klein Legendary Service Award winner.

The next Legendary Service Award winner has worked at her hotel for 39 years and is a driving force in the hotel's food and beverage department. Behind her leadership, the hotel has revamped how it operates. Her ability to cooperate with other departments has been an instrumental and irreplaceable asset. The Arlington Chamber of Commerce is proud to name **Ching Chao** of the **Holiday Inn Rosslyn** a 2017 Bob Klein Legendary Service Award winner.

Our next Legendary Service Award winner has served for 40 years. Her most rewarding experience has been watching her team members grow personally and professionally, including one employee who went from a dishwasher position to a server then bartender. This winner goes above and beyond every day, and has created long-lasting relationships with guests who bring their children and grandchildren to meet her. She is motivated and inspired by her work family. The Arlington Chamber of Commerce is proud to name **Ping Sangthong** of the **Crowne Plaza Washington National Airport** a 2017 Bob Klein Legendary Service Award winner.

Our final Legendary Service Award winner has worked at his hotel as for 41 years. He has helped the hotel reach new milestones in the food and beverage department. The systems he has created to eliminate food waste have transformed the hotel. He has been a consistent and steady hand – one that the hotel is grateful to have. The Arlington Chamber of Commerce is proud to name ***Philip Chao*** of the **Holiday Inn Rosslyn** a 2017 Bob Klein Legendary Service Award winner.
