

## SPIRIT of DOM Award Recipients

May 1, 2019



**Marlena Hartman-Filson**  
Clinical Research Coordinator  
General Internal Medicine  
ZSFG

**Marlena Hartman-Filson** is a Clinical Research Coordinator in the Division of General Internal Medicine (DGIM) at ZSFG. She has demonstrated a high level of competence in operating and managing complex clinical studies, an outstanding ability to lead a team of staff and trainees at a young level of accomplishment, and an unparalleled ability to connect in a meaningful way with persons who have experienced substantial trauma from homelessness and substance use.

Over the past two years, Marlena has led DGIM projects on tobacco use in homeless populations by managing the day-to-day operations, including data collection and data management, and communications among our team members that include trainees as well as research staff. She is on the ground coordinating data collection with community partners and delegating tasks to our research team; conducting interviews one-on-one with our participants, the majority who are homeless; maintaining an open channel of communication between UCSF team members and community partners; and compiling the data in a meaningful way for dissemination. Her nominator credits their high follow-up rates in all of their studies (>85% at 6 months follow-up) among a population that is hard to reach entirely due to Marlena's ability to connect and engage with our participants. Indeed, this is not a learned trait; she is naturally gifted and outstanding in connecting with individuals who identify as being part of a gender and sexual minority group or have experienced substantial trauma from homelessness and/or substance use. Her open, empathetic, and non-judgmental manner of communication are some of the primary reasons for why their participants have shared challenging experiences around their substance use and homelessness.

Further, Marlena did a great job as the lead Clinical Research Coordinator for one of my NIH-funded studies (called LEAP) and shared responsibility for another multisite research study in San Francisco. This LEAP study involved recruiting individuals newly diagnosed with HIV infection and following them as they started antiretroviral therapy (ART). The study had floundered over

its first 6 months as the majority of the new HIV diagnoses were young men who were active drug users (mostly methamphetamines) and whose lives were complicated by homelessness. Marlana was the perfect person for the position and much of its success is due to her personality, persistence, perseverance, and problem-solving.

She has participated in DGIM service activities by joining panels to inform discussions around research space to conduct interviews with participants from the community. She has fervently advocated for their study participants to ease any inconvenience that might come as a result of participating in our studies. In this and many other ways, Marlana is exemplar of all the PRIDE values at UCSF. She is highly professional and extremely competent and, in fact, excelling at everything that she takes on. She is compassionate, deeply committed to our University's mission of equity and diversity and conducts her work with integrity.

On a personal note, Marlana is a gardener. She holds a weekly community vegetable garden in her front yard for her neighbors, including homeless individuals with whom she is acquainted with and who spend time at the park next to her home. Congratulations, Marlana!

**Karen Yuan**, the Assistant Division for the Division of Geriatrics at UCSF Health, was supported by 11 nominations from colleagues, faculty, and supervisors. Common themes throughout her nominations highlight the fact that she embodies the PRIDE Values every day and makes working in the division the best it can be. There are numerous examples of the superior effort and support that Karen provides by going above and beyond her line of duty. Through her ability to utilize her networks within UCSF, she is able to quickly and efficiently solve the most complicated problems.



**Karen Yuan**  
Assistant Division Manager  
Geriatrics  
UCSF Health

She is trustworthy and truly committed to the success of the division. Karen is described as an exceptional servant leader who goes out of her way to express appreciation for the accomplishments of her colleagues and for seeking to ensure that everyone has the resources needed to succeed. In her current role, she is highly active in assessing the needs of faculty and staff and improving processes to help the division operate more efficiently. Notably, she has made herself an expert on the administrative processes that are required to get work done. When faculty colleagues in other divisions have trouble negotiating the bureaucracy, faculty within the Division of Geriatrics often refer them to the Karen in order to quickly and kindly solve problems for them.

She is an inspiration to others because she demonstrates kindness and empathy, remains calm and thoughtful in difficult conversations, is an active listener, shares her thoughts and ideas, is punctual, and she follows through with what she says she will do.

Karen is an inspiring force – helping the UCSF Division of Geriatrics grow stronger partnerships with each of the major sites of UCSF (e.g., SFVAMC, Parnassus/Laurel Heights, ZSFG) as well as multiple community organizations. She has been instrumental in navigating the financial processes and requirements governing UCSF, NCIRE, ZSFG, professional service agreements and VA funding. Amazingly, she finds a way to obtain necessary data, models financial projections and solves complex financial issues that has had a positive impact and allowed the division to grow in a financially sound manner across the campuses of UCSF. She has helped develop and manage successful financial partnerships across divisions, health systems, Departments, and Schools, helping to add more than 15 new faculty members at Laurel Heights/Parnassus, SFVAMC and ZSFG since she joined the Division. She has a rare combination of financial acumen and big-picture problem-solving that faculty love because she finds a way make things work.

Beyond her superior work ethic and innate ability to lead her peers, she is wonderful mentor and key to improving and sustaining morale within the division. She has a can-do attitude, and a stellar ability to work quickly and make a difference in other's work experience – becoming a role model that colleagues look up to.

Karen doesn't hide behind the details of her job description; she recognizes that her job is part of a larger effort and she tries to advance that larger effort at every turn. Sometimes, it's by doing her job efficiently. Other times, it's by taking on additional tasks when needed. In sum, her nominators couldn't think of a more deserving candidate for this award than Karen.  
Congratulations!