

**Wednesday, April 25th is National Administrative Professionals Day**

*Sue Ryan*

*Executive Director, Delaware Coalition Against Domestic Violence*

Administrative Professionals make up a fifth of the world's working population and are 98% female.<sup>1</sup>

Although the position of Administrative Professional often carries enormous responsibility, it does not often afford corresponding authority. In hierarchical structures, Administrative Professionals can be seen as less important than the truth of their work. These hierarchies can foster situations which give rise to sexual harassment at work. Sexual harassment is about power and control over another and as the *#MeToo* movement has highlighted, it is rampant throughout American businesses.

During this April, DCADV would like to acknowledge the relentless and brave advocacy of *Eleanor Holmes Norton*, an African-American woman and civil rights icon who in 1970 held the first public hearings on sexism and discrimination in America as a congresswoman and the first woman chair of the New York City Human Rights Commission. Those hearings laid the grounds for conversations and lawsuits on sex discrimination today—including sexual harassment.<sup>2</sup>



Norton became the first woman to chair the Equal Opportunities Employment Commission (EEOC) and while there engaged in groundbreaking work to define sexual harassment as a form of sexual discrimination prohibited by Title VII.

Today, Norton serves as a non-voting delegate to the United States House of Representatives, representing the District of Columbia.

DCADV want to acknowledge the courageous, relentless commitment of Eleanor Holmes Norton for her lifelong work in raising awareness around sexism and her work was critical in creating workplace protections against sexual harassment.

On this special day, remember to thank your office's Administrative Professional: secretaries, assistants, clerks, receptionists. Administrative Professionals are essential members of the team, often the first to respond to those in need and yet, the last to be thanked. They juggle many responsibilities and expectations, and their voice, perspective and insights are critical to achieving organizational goals. Many thanks to Administrative Professionals everywhere for all your hard work!

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<sup>1</sup> An Open Letter to the World's CEOs on Administrative Professional Day, Lucy Brazier | Publisher | Executive Secretary Magazine, April 23, 2105

<sup>2</sup> A Short History of the Long Fight Against Workplace Sexual Harassment, December 2017, <https://broadly.vice.com>