Sarah Woodard
Administrative Coordinator,
Office of Human Resources

Sarah Woodard is the co-recipient of the 2011 Algernon Sydney Sullivan Award from Duke University. This award seeks to perpetuate the excellence of character and humanitarian service of Algernon Sydney Sullivan by recognizing and honoring such qualities in others. A recipient of this award is known to his/her colleagues and peers as someone who exemplifies the qualities of generosity, service, integrity, and deep spirituality, as well as "nobility of character," which the Sullivan Foundation defines as "when one goes outside the narrow circle of self-interest and begins to spend oneself for the interests of humankind."

For nineteen years Sarah has worked with Duke (Triangle) Hospice. As a patient/family volunteer, she has exemplified the excellence of character and humanitarian service recognized by this award. Sarah has spent her life in varied services to the Durham community. Very close to home, she helped organize and run the Asthma Walk, which attracted 350 people to support many of the asthma patients served by Duke and is
currently helping raise funds for a conference at Duke Gardens where she has served as a docent. As a past president of the Durham/Orange Junior League, Sarah has been involved in multiple service projects for the Triangle region as well as serving as a mentor for young women who are interested in lives of service. She led Stephen Ministry at St. Philip’s Church in downtown Durham and is currently serving as deacon for St. Titus Episcopal Church in Durham. Sarah worked to represent Durham to the larger world through her service on the board of directors of the Sister Cities League.

Over the years, Sarah has found a very special niche in patient and family hospice care for Alzheimer’s patients. These patients often don’t remember Sarah between visits. Why bother with these people, you might ask? Because, Sarah will tell you, they are people—men and women with families and histories, people who though sadly diminished deserve to be recognized, remembered, and valued until the end of their lives. Sarah does the very difficult work of recognizing people who may be unrecognizable even to their closest loved ones. She remembers by her visits those who are often forgotten.
Like Algernon Sullivan, Sarah Woodard has “reached out both hands in constant helpfulness to others.” There is no “narrow circle” in her life. In her professional work and volunteer positions, she engages regularly with people in positions of power and authority. Through Duke Hospice she works lovingly with people who are powerless in every sense of the word. She visits them, speaks to them, sings to them, and cares for and about them as long as they have need of her. Year in and year out she encircles the people of Durham with her care and spends herself for the interests of her community.