

Sheila Dolezal, 'team player extraordinaire,' wins 2018 Amy J. Blue Award | News Center

After graduating, she served as a branch manager of a savings-and-loan in nearby Sunnyvale, California, but realized after a few years that the job wasn't a good fit.

She decided to follow her late mother's advice: "If your heart's not in it, find where your heart is."

Dolezal found her heart and her passion at Stanford.

"I witnessed firsthand the many health and other struggles my mother experienced in life, and I have always wanted to be part of a mission and vision to advance a woman's place in society, and health care is a foundational element of this vision," she said. "I was so impressed by how Stanford had cared for my younger sister, who had several orthopedic surgeries here, and the care they gave to my mother, who had diabetes. So I had a deep respect for this institution as a whole. When I had the opportunity to join Stanford in 1990, I grabbed it."

Dolezal worked in the hospital's admitting office for about four years, then joined the finance and administration staff in the Department of Radiology. Some five years later, she joined the Department of Obstetrics & Gynecology.

Commended for dedication, grace, sense of humor

Colleagues who nominated Dolezal for the Amy J. Blue Award

said the department could not have grown and prospered without her knowledge and support of its mission.

“Despite having no formal medical training, it would not be a stretch to state that Sheila’s leadership and dedication have undoubtedly improved the care of countless women in the Bay Area and beyond,” one professor wrote in a letter nominating Dolezal for the award. “More recently, Sheila has been very supportive of initiatives outside of our department, serving in medical student interviews and as a mentor for the School of Medicine mentorship program.”

Colleagues said Dolezal’s door is always open:

“As busy as she is, Sheila somehow finds the time to genuinely listen to and care for the myriad of people who seek her out. From faculty member to administrative staff, from fellow-in-training to resident, she is there to listen to concerns, provide meaningful feedback and help chart a path forward. She is a mentor to so many, including young administrative and research managers trying to develop a skill set in how to create productive, nurturing teams. She is a caring, special, can-do person. It is hard for us to imagine this department without her.”

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Colleagues also praised Dolezal’s “inclusive and pervasive” sense of humor:

“I have heard laughs ring out during the most serious of finance meetings, easing tensions and bringing everyone into the fold. She wins over others quickly with joy and warmth, and sees well-timed opportunities for levity in the midst of the sometimes ‘heavy’ hospital setting. Her authenticity in this joy is so engaging and endearing, that, when taken together with her strategic mind, it is clear why she has had such an impact on the people in this department.”

Professors said Dolezal was instrumental in the establishment of gynecologic oncology services at the new [Stanford Cancer Center South Bay](#) in San Jose, California, and at Stanford Health Care's [ValleyCare Medical Center](#) in Pleasanton, California, and played a key role in launching and expanding the department's faculty midwifery program.

"In addition to her in-depth knowledge of finances and business aspects that are important to the viability of our entire department, Sheila has a profound understanding of the systems and workflows within the School of Medicine and the two hospitals – Stanford Health Care and [Lucile Packard Children's Hospital](#)," one professor wrote.

"It is difficult to imagine a more accomplished and knowledgeable director of finance and administration for any department. On top of this, Sheila has extraordinary people skills and an always positively reinforcing attitude that percolates not only through the administrative staff, but the entire department, including faculty, fellows, resident and students. By all measures, Sheila is a more-than-worthy recipient of the Amy J. Blue Award."