

# 2007 NOAA Fisheries Employee of the Year Nomination Narrative

**Nominee's Name: Last, First, Middle:**

Breaker, Mary A. \_\_\_\_\_

**Nomination Category:**

Administrative support \_\_\_\_\_

**Address at Least One of the Following Factors in the Justification Below.**

**Contributions to NOAA and NOAA Fisheries programs that resulted in:**

**For Non-Management:**

- Enhanced economic viability of commercial and/or recreational fishing;
- Enhanced public appreciation for the mission of the agency;
- Enhanced safety or health of NOAA Fisheries workforce;
- Enhanced morale of the NOAA Fisheries workforce or inspired excellence in its members;
- Enhanced stewardship of NOAA Fisheries protected/managed species/associated habitats;
- Improved accuracy, reliability, or reproducibility of scientific results;
- Improved customer service;
- Increased efficiency and/or reduced cost of operations;
- Improved equal employment opportunity or diversity in NOAA Fisheries;
- Strengthened ties to other NOAA elements or NOAA Fisheries constituents; and/or
- Brought unusual credit to NOAA Fisheries or members of its workforce.

**For Management:**

- Demonstrated exceptional leadership, development of the workforce, and/or program management.

It is with great pleasure and enthusiasm that I nominate Mary Breaker for employee of the year in the Administrative Support category. The success of my scientific program is deeply linked to the skill and professionalism with which Mary performs her administrative duties. Mary provides administrative and budget support to the FRAM division at the NWFSC. As such, she is responsible for much of the business conducted by three program managers, a division coordinator, numerous team leaders and a division director. Her contributions fundamentally increase the efficiency and the cost effectiveness of our operations and enhance the morale of all FRAM staff. However, I will focus my remarks solely on her impact on my program since her influence has been profound and, I, of course, have experienced it personally.

The hallmark of government science is teamwork. On our team, I think of Mary as our offensive line—she works in the trenches and clears the way so others can get the glory. As a rule, scientists are not terribly good at the business side of the job, yet it is this side of our profession that is necessary to generate the data, models and statistical analyses that form the foundation of our science. Mary makes sure we do the business side of our jobs correctly, on time and with great accuracy. She does not let us fail. And, I for one, would surely fail without her. She patiently walks me through the inane and arcane forms and procedures that characterize government work. Let me be clear—I despise government forms and procedures and consequently, I seem to be unable to remember the right way to do anything. Yet, Mary is there. No matter how many times I forget how to do something, Mary is there. She seems to know what I need when I need it, and often knows what I need before I need it.

Mary performs her duties with consistent excellence year after year, and she did so again this past year. So, why is this year different than any other year? The loss of key staff put our administrative group in a bit of a bind this past year. Mary stepped up and increased her work load to cover the work that was no longer being completed by one of her (now former) co-workers. Normally, one would expect her ability to fulfill her primary function would decline, but this was not the case. She rose to the occasion and performed her duties with skill, grace and proficiency. Eventually, the staffing issue was solved, and Mary returned to her normal duties. However, after only a few months of normalcy, the new staff member was stricken with a serious illness that forced her from the office for many weeks. Mary again stepped up. One could imagine that in such a situation, an employee might be bitter or angry. This was not the case. Mary, once again, did what needed to be done. She was there with wit and ability. And, again, she cleared the way so the science could go on, so the analyses could be completed, so the collaborations could grow.