Dear Colleague,

Please read on to find out about and make nominations for the newly commissioned Rebecca Clark Staff Award for Moral Courage.

Background

The idea for the Rebecca Clark Staff Award for Moral Courage came about at a meeting of the Employee Forum’s Executive Committee. The committee discussed how it could recognize staff members on campus who have advocated on behalf of other staff at the University and who have improved working conditions for others on campus. We discussed the idea of proposing that an award be created and conferred at University Day alongside the Edward Kidder Graham and Distinguished Alumnus Awards.

Naming of the Award

Rebecca Clark (1915-2009), a former UNC Chapel Hill staff member, African-American political activist, and civil rights organizer, fought against unequal pay and workplace discrimination. Clark worked briefly as a housekeeper at the Carolina Inn in the late 1930s and again in the 1950s as a nurse until her retirement in 1979. She became the first licensed practical nurse to work in the campus infirmary. She worked with administrators to obtain affordable housing for Carolina’s lowest-paid employees. Clark also tirelessly registered African-American voters and gained the respect of many local and state public servants. Clark died in 2009.

As a result of her efforts, the University named the Cheek-Clark Building, formerly the University Laundry, after her and Kennon Cheek, organizer of the Janitorial Association. Clark is an important figure in the University’s history: she always stood up for her fellow workers and advocated for better working conditions. She was so persistent that her coworkers nicknamed her “Squeaky Clark.” Clark exemplified
a courageous spirit and willingness to speak out about inequities from a vulnerable position despite potential retaliation. Her strong sense of fairness, personal integrity, and insistence on equality are values that the Employee Forum promotes among all staff and the greater UNC Chapel Hill community. Thus, it is fitting that this award be named the Rebecca Clark Staff Award for Moral Courage.

**Funding of the Award**

The University has pledged a $2,500 stipend to the award winner and will recognize that person in a ceremony during University Day festivities.

**Make Your Nomination Now!**

Follow this [link](http://go.unc.edu/staff-clark-award) to submit your nomination of a UNC-Chapel Hill staff employee. Nominations must be received by Monday, August 24, 2020 at 11:59 p.m.

Nomination link: [http://go.unc.edu/staff-clark-award](http://go.unc.edu/staff-clark-award)