

# *Robin Hairston* **NOMINATION**

## “ **Why should McKnight’s consider this nominee?**”

For nearly 44 years, Robin Hairston has been the heartbeat of Concord Reserve at Life Enriching Communities. As a Certified Nurse Aide, she has given her life’s work to the care of others—always with compassion, grace, and a strength that has inspired everyone around her. Her impact stretches far beyond daily tasks. She has shaped a culture of love and dignity that residents, families, and team members feel the moment they walk through the doors.

Robin's gift is her ability to see people for who they truly are. She notices the small details others might overlook. Whether it is a resident struggling with fear, a new team member trying to find their footing, or a family navigating difficult decisions, Robin responds with patience, wisdom, and unwavering presence.

Her care is deeply personal. One resident, fearful and resistant to showering, began bathing regularly—not because of protocol, but because she trusted Robin. Another, hesitant to walk again after several falls, regained her confidence because Robin walked every step with her. These are not isolated moments. They are daily examples of how Robin meets people where they are and gently guides them forward.



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Robin also serves as a natural mentor. New hires train with her because she models what it means to lead with heart and integrity. She teaches not just how to complete a task, but how to do it with kindness and respect. Her colleagues know they can count on her for encouragement, wisdom, and the occasional light-hearted joke to ease a tough day.

She never seeks recognition, yet her work speaks volumes. Robin brings love and care to every person she meets, creating moments that matter, even when no one is watching. Her performance reviews, resident and peer feedback, and long list of stories all say the same thing: she is one of a kind.

Robin Hairston has built a career with compassion, connection, and a relentless commitment to doing what is right. And through that, she has built a legacy that will long outlast her time on the clock.

**Explain how this nominee has been a standout in the industry throughout the decades or an agent for change at their current or previous place of work.**

Robin stands out not because she asks to—but because her presence changes everything. She is the kind of person who sets a tone without saying a word. Her example encourages others to show up more fully, to care more deeply, and always to keep the residents at the center.

She holds herself to the highest standards, and she gently expects the same from those around her. When something isn't right, she speaks up, not with blame, but with care. She reminds others why this work matters and ensures that the residents she loves are always treated with the dignity they deserve.



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Robin's influence on training and onboarding is immeasurable. She takes joy in helping new caregivers find their footing and gives them the tools and mindset they need to grow. Robin loves training new CNAs and RAs to carry the values of compassion and consistency throughout their careers.

She is the quiet force behind a team that runs smoothly and works with heart. During the challenges of the pandemic, Robin was a steady hand and a source of reassurance. Even in moments of loss and change, she showed up with love and steadiness that made the difference for both residents and associates.

Perhaps one of Robin's most meaningful achievements is the environment she helps create. It is one of respect, accountability, and genuine connection. Residents feel safe. Families feel supported. Coworkers feel uplifted.

She doesn't just do her job. She raises the standard for everyone around her.

### **How has this nominee made a wider contribution to the industry?**

Robin Hairston has spent over four decades helping others grow—not just in skill, but in heart. While she has never held a formal leadership title, she has been the emotional compass of her team. Her greatest contribution to the senior care field is the culture of kindness, consistency, and dignity she has passed down to those who now carry the torch.

Every new caregiver who works with her receives more than training; they receive grounding. Robin doesn't just explain how to bathe a resident or log a chart; she teaches the importance of eye contact,



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tone of voice, and honoring a person’s life story. She helps her teammates understand that this work is sacred, and she does so without fanfare—only presence.

She creates a sense of safety for new team members by showing them, through quiet example, that excellence in caregiving isn’t about speed or perfection. It’s about noticing, listening, and being fully present. Her consistency builds confidence. Her kindness reduces fear. Her trust becomes their foundation.

Robin also fosters a culture of gratitude. Every single shift, she thanks her coworkers for showing up. She reminds them that they are needed, seen, and valued. That simple habit has become a powerful part of the environment around her—lifting morale and reminding others why they chose this field in the first place. “Come back tomorrow,” she’ll often say with a smile, “we need people like you.” It’s not just something she says. It’s something she means.

Robin’s impact also reaches families and visitors. She makes a point to learn each resident’s story, their fears, their joys. She extends care to those who walk through the doors, not just those on her assignment sheet. Her actions remind everyone that senior care is both a science and an art.

In a time when caregiving faces enormous pressures and turnover, Robin is a reminder of what is possible when someone leads with purpose. Her way of being has helped ground and inspire generations of caregivers.

### **Is there anything else the judges should know about this nominee?**

Robin Hairston represents the best of what senior living can be. For nearly 44 years, she has shown what it means to care



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consistently, compassionately, and with purpose. Robin doesn't see her work as a job. She sees it as a calling. She is a caregiver, an encourager, and, in many ways, the keeper of her community's heart. Her humor lightens heavy days, and her steady presence brings calm to moments that might otherwise feel uncertain. She takes joy in seeing her residents smile, in mentoring new team members, and in making sure every person she encounters feels valued.

Her impact runs so deep that her colleagues have already begun talking about how to honor her legacy. When Robin decides to retire, her departure will leave a space that cannot easily be filled. When talking to coworkers about Robin, simply put: "We will never see this kind of dedication again." A coworker also proposed naming a section of Concord Reserve in her honor, a reflection of just how profoundly she has shaped the spirit of the place.

Robin brings her full self to this work—heart, humor, grace, and grit. Outside of work, she enjoys gardening, sharing meals with family and friends, and watching sports. But when asked what matters most, she gently spread her hands, gestured towards the residents, and said, "I don't have children... these are my children." It was not just a sentiment—it was the truth of how she approaches every day.

She has helped residents feel safe. She has helped coworkers feel valued. And she has helped Concord Reserve feel like home. Everyone who works with Robin knows the truth—she is efficient, dependable, and endlessly thoughtful. She is the kind of person every team hopes to have.

Robin has never asked for praise. She does the work consistently, with humility, and with extraordinary love. Her legacy is felt in the residents she cared for with tenderness, the teammates she uplifted with



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kindness, and the families who saw in her a source of comfort and trust.

To call her a caregiver feels too small. Robin Hairston has been a light. A leader. A legend.