From baking birthday cakes and preparing pre-game meals to greeting visitors with a smile, Pat Smith, chief administrative assistant for the Washington University in St. Louis football team, makes it a priority to help all involved with the WUSTL football program feel special.

In recognition of her dedication to the success and support of WUSTL student-athletes, coaches and families, Smith was recognized with the Gloria W. White Distinguished Service Award in the May 21 Staff Day ceremony in Edison Theatre.

The award, which is presented annually and comes with a $1,000 prize, provides recognition to a nonacademic staff member for exceptional effort and contributions that have resulted in the betterment of the university.

During Smith’s more than 10 years with the football team, she has been “the glue that keeps our program together, in good times and bad,” a colleague said, noting Smith’s welcoming nature, ever-present smile and dedication to boosting morale of parents and players through her efforts and positive attitude.

During the season — among her many support activities for the football team — Smith organizes and hosts pregame meals for parents, coaches and players. She and her husband cart “hundreds of pounds of food and beverages out to the front of the Athletic Complex prior to every game, help prepare the food, and then visit with the parents prior to the game.” When the game is over, Smith continues to serve food and cleans up afterward.

For Smith, who joined WUSTL in 2001, her efforts don’t end with the offseason.

“Each year, we hold an end-of-season banquet that Pat organizes from the ground-up,” the colleague said. “Each one of our players receives individualized action photos that Pat has meticulously sorted through. This send-off for our seniors makes each and every one of them feel special.”

Source: Record, June 13, 2012; article by Jessica Daues