

Women in Energy Story Telling

Special Collection
Celebrating
International Women's Day
8 March 2018



Women in Energy
The ICER International Network

Table of Contents

- 3** Foreword by John W. Betkoski III,
ICER Chairman
- 5** Introduction by Una Shortall,
Chair of ICER's Women in Energy
Steering Group
- 6** Ranjini Nayager
- 11** Doina Vornicu
- 15** Silviya Deyanova
- 19** Anne Hoskins
- 23** Sherina Maye Edwards
- 29** Karen Morton
- 33** Commissioner Ann Rendahl
- 37** Imron Bhatti

Foreword

It is my distinct privilege to welcome you to our second ICER publication dedicated to highlighting women in the energy sector. Our publication of this special edition coincides with not only International Women's Day but also the Seventh World Forum on Energy Regulation. It is fitting that, at a moment when we come together as an international community to share ideas and challenges, we are mindful in noting and celebrating the important role women leaders are playing in our sector.

I encourage you to read these stories deeply, to draw wisdom and inspiration from them. As we see our world breaking down many of the outdated and harmful norms that women face, we can turn to these stories and the women who tell them, to show us not only how to navigate these challenges but also change them for the good of all.

I want to personally thank Una Shortall for her tireless work as Chair of ICER's Women in Energy Steering Group these past several years. Under her leadership, ICER has not only provided a platform for women to share their stories of growth and achievement but also built a sustaining network of leaders and mentors to cultivate a new generation of empowered women to lead the energy sector forward. To Ms. Shortall and to all those who have contributed to the Women in Energy Steering Group, you have my gratitude.

I am humbled that one of my last responsibilities as ICER Chairman is to offer this publication to you, as I continue to be proud that ICER can advance the cause of women in so many different ways. Again, thank you to those who shared their stories and lessons, and I look forward to the next chapter from you.

John W. Betkoski III

ICER Chairman



www.icer-regulators.net





Introduction

To celebrate International Women's Day 2018, the International Confederation of Energy Regulators (ICER) bring you eight fascinating Women in Energy stories. The stories span the world. They range from the newcomer who has moved to a new country to join the energy regulatory authority through to CEOs and Commissioners.

Our Women in Energy stories bring to life the faces behind the energy projects or companies that many of us might have heard about. Imagining the steps to becoming the company CEO or the regulator is no longer an abstract concept. These are real women—our women—who talk about their experiences, their jobs, and the ups and downs of their journeys.

Born in apartheid South Africa, Ranjini Nayager's story could easily have been one of hatred or victimhood. Instead, it is about having the courage to believe in yourself and having the conviction to be true to yourself and your principles. This is only one of our stories.

I have had the great honour to lead the ICER Women in Energy (WIE) initiative over the past 5 years, and to meet (at least virtually) many amazing women. Besides storytelling, ICER WIE offers women regulators mentoring, webinars, and access to a massive global network of professional women (peers and role models).

ICER's Women in Energy own success story is down to the hundreds of men and women who have embraced the initiative of helping women go further and faster in their careers. This stretches from the young women and their mentors who joined our mentoring programme, to the ICER leadership (traditionally mostly male dominated) who supported us, and the women who take the time to tell their stories.

What I love most about the Women in Energy stories is their authenticity—there is always something in the story that resonates with the reader. These authentic, personal stories reflect the richness and diversity of our global network of energy regulators. Geographical and cultural boundaries fade when people connect



through storytelling. As Ranjini summaries, “WIE is also about telling stories, so that you can get strength and succour from a community of men and women who believe in you and your potential.”

Enjoy these latest stories. Keep sending us more stories for future editions of the ICER Chronicle.

Una Shortall

Chair of ICER’s Women in Energy Steering Group





Ranjini Nayager

From Australia

Of late, I get asked 'why does an apparently normal, psychologically stable, logical human being willingly go diving in a place that has the highest concentration of great white sharks in the world?' Yes, why indeed. The answer to this question holds a key to why I have achieved what I have on a personal and professional level and why I am choosing to share my story with you.

As I watched a few two meter sharks swim towards the heaving boat anchored off the coast of South Africa, I held onto the railing as the dive master gave instructions or something. I saw his mouth move, but did not hear the words, instead my brain was focused on the sharks and thinking that if I did not hold on, I was lunch. It was at that point I asked myself, 'why are you doing this?' I collected myself, reined in that sickening feeling in the pit of my stomach called 'terror', scrambled down the stairs and somehow tugged and squeezed into a wetsuit and was of the first to get into the cage and then lowered into the swirling green sea. The sharks circled. My brain froze. I eventually calmed down to enjoy the beauty of these amazing creatures and the serenity of the ocean. My fear returned when the sharks suddenly swam away and I thought, what can possibly scare the killers of the ocean - a bigger shark off course. A shark about five meters long appeared from the green depths of the ocean and circled us opening its mouth enough for

me to realise that I could fit into its mouth and body. Strangely I was not as fearful as I was on the boat. My fear arose from a combination of watching the film 'Jaws' at a tender age, media, my imagination and my fear of the unknown.

A realisation hit as the boat sped back to shore to avoid being caught in the fast approaching storm. I survived the shark dive yes, but I realised that I am fortunate to have parents who reinforced to me at an early age that I should never be afraid of fear itself and being afraid to fail. The reason why I dived with sharks, why I am a chief executive in a masculine dominated field of energy and utility regulation is because I am not afraid to fail. I realised that being afraid to fail is one the things that prevents women from realising their potential.

My fears, your fears, our fears are grounded on a perception that we have to be right. I don't. You don't. We don't. I make mistakes. I own my mistakes, learn from them and move on. I use my failures, my mistakes to challenge myself to step out of my comfort zone (shark diving), to take risks (bungy jumping), to challenge my mind and my perceptions and to take a chance on me (applying for jobs). So if you, reader, wherever you are in the world, have ever had that sickening feeling where fear holds your insides in a vice like grip, or you have ever told yourself or been told by others, that you can't or should not do something because of your gender, your age, your colour, your cultural background or just because you can't: take a chance on you. Dealing with challenges in life can be hindered by fears. Don't be afraid to realise your potential and take a chance on yourself. Why not? What is the worst that can happen? No is a word that only has power over our self-esteem when we choose to give it power.

One of the biggest challenges I faced when I started in the energy sector, was being underestimated because I am a woman. I had to recognise that those internal voices telling me in so many ways that I was an outsider, new and a woman were voices which were not mine and that these voices were holding me back. I worked hard to consciously recognise that the negativity that comes with the opinions of others were the only shackles holding me back, those external voices, I internalised. My shackles were not my gender, not my sex, not my melanin levels, not my age, but me letting the voices of others become the shackles which



Ranjini Nayager

stopped me realising my potential. I made a choice. I chose to realise my potential. I chose to face my fears and take a chance on me.

Being born in apartheid South Africa in a time of racial, social and gender inequality, my story could easily have been one of hatred of the other or victimhood. But I was born to parents who believed in the potential of each and every human being. It is my parents and maternal grandmother who are the cornerstones of why I am the way I am and why I believe in sharing my story, which is anyone's story. It is a story about having the courage to believe in yourself and having the conviction to be true to yourself and your principles.

Above all else, I was taught to believe in myself, that I am capable of achieving my dreams if I worked hard, received formal education and learnt through the experience of others. I was told and believe that I am worthy. I was taught and believe that a girl, a woman with education has the power to shape her own life.

A life-long project I have and am working on involves education of women. Education is not just in books, the internet, but can be gleaned from stories and experiences of others. From a young age, I would always help girls in my grade who were behind at school and so it was natural for me to set up when I was at university a free tutorial programme for high school students who came from disadvantaged backgrounds. The challenges involved balancing my time with my university schedule, financial resources, self-motivation and motivation others to join the programme – I struggled to keep up with demand and needed help. The first real challenge I faced was to accept that needing help is not a sign of failure.

Asking for help is not a sign of weakness, but of strength and recognising the necessity of putting the programme's needs and benefits (the students) ahead of my ego. I did. I am proud that the programme is still operational. This programme has helped so many students and tutors in so many ways. The WIE mentoring programme to me is a normal thing to be involved in. I also see the programme as a way in which we can facilitate changes in organisational cultures to not only keep women in paid employment and help talented women advance in their chosen careers, but also to provide a safe environment for women to air their fears and come to a realisation that we all share the same fears, a shared humanity, we



Ranjini Nayager

can be stronger together, find hope and learn how to be part of the solution and not a problem. Cultural change occurs in organisations through a number of ways, but a key is normalising the enforcement by leaders of organisation of merit-based practices of organisations. Collectively and individually, we need to diminish the power of stereotyping of women and senior managers recruiting from within: within organisations, within gender groups, within cultural groups, within age groups. This is what I want to change – stereotyping of women and this is the reason I am part of the WIE programme which at its simplest to me is about including not excluding people. I want to normalise talent, intelligence and skills in recruitment and advancement choices. Gender, age, colour, cultural background etc., should never matter. That is what I strive for every day.

And, so back to sharks of all kinds. I rarely tell people that I am a lawyer (lawyers some would say are species of shark) and a chief executive because when I do, I see the colour drain from their faces as they are either in astonishment or so afraid, they are in a state of terrified silence and they make a quick exit. Whilst I could describe what I do as diving with sharks, I am more apt to describe what I do as running crèche for adults which tends not to have the effect of draining people of their colour. I chose to dive with sharks in Shark Alley not because I am psychologically unbalanced and have a death wish, but because I chose to face my fear – fear itself. I also choose to view myself as a successful, strong woman of colour grounded in ethics, surrounded by strong, supportive men and women who have given me what I think the WIE can give you: access to experiences, access to seeing the potential of your life and your abilities and an ability to pursue your dreams. WIE is also about telling stories, so that you can get strength and succour from a community of men and woman who believe in you and your potential. ■

Ranjini Nayager

The first thing to know about me is that I am real and I am human. I was born in South Africa in the wrong hospital (hospitals were segregated) to parents who challenged the Apartheid system. I have been going against the grain ever since. I have lived my life learning from others and doing what makes my soul sing. I have taken chances, changed degrees, changed countries, changed industries and changed my perception of myself.

After university I worked for a judge, dabbled in litigation and ran as far away as I could from asking



Ranjini Nayager

people for images of injuries to their nether regions. I entered the world of financial services, ate bbq field rat, snake 5 ways, and a 'special' pizza and took an amble down the Tatai River. Later I entered the world of utility regulation.

I never set out to be the Chief General Counsel or Chief Executive. I set out to enjoy my life, learn a lot and give back to the society that gave me so much. I do not believe in box ticking and see every setback as an opportunity to refine what I want to do and where I want be. Life is about learning – I will only stop learning the moment my mitochondria stops. I love to have a bit of fun every day, am comfortable in my own skin, sing loudly and badly and strive to be the consummate professional. I have a deep respect for the world and my fellow regulators.





Doina Vornicu

From Romania

My name is Doina Vornicu, I am the Chief Operations Officer of CEZ Group in Romania, one of the well-known leaders of the energy sector.

I am currently involved in the transformation of CEZ Group in Romania into a smart company, with improved processes, like remote control grids, better services and new technologies.

When I look back at the starting point of my career, I would say that the first real contact with the energy field happened after my graduation in 1985, when I started working at IRE Botosani, a subsidiary of the Industrial Plant of Energy Grids of the Energy Ministry.

Then came the year of 1991, when I became the first Romanian Technical Director of the National Energy System, this being my first big step on the career ladder.

Other top management positions followed in SC Electrica SA (the Romanian national energy company), the General Directorate of FRE Botosani in 2000, and the Manager position of International Projects at Transelectrica in 2005, where I got the opportunity to launch the project of the 400 kV Romanian–Turkish submarine cable.

Doina Vornicu

My path in the energy field offered me the opportunity to encounter all sorts of great personalities, starting with the people that built the national energy system from which I had the chance to learn strategy, tactics, politics, and more important, how to improve my work.

Another important lesson I got from those times is that there's more to being a good manager than perseverance and hard work, it's about giving your colleagues a goal and convincing them to follow that goal— which will bring the whole team a well-earned success.

In 2006, a new and exciting opportunity was revealed to me in the energy private sector, this being the moment I joined CEZ Group in Romania, a company that puts a great value on its employees, helping and preparing them at a superlative level and giving them the chance to strive. I am the best proof of that, being the first Romanian manager granted the second position of importance in the group's business in Romania, that of Chief Operations Officer.

I am often asked who do I give credit for my success? And my answer is simple: to my family and colleagues, the persons I have encountered in this field, which somehow managed to shape me into the person that I am now. It's all about people and their dreams. Energy comes from people, as we at the CEZ Group in Romania, like to say.

I never had trouble in balancing work and family time because my family is very supportive of my work, they are always there, beside me, encouraging and helping me all the way. I would not have gotten so far in my career if it weren't for them; they gave me confidence and support throughout the most important moments. My husband for instance, is also an engineer in the field, so he gets the utility and importance of my job.

The main perk of my job and of those in the energy field, is the chance we get to provide an essential item in everybody's life by lighting up the bulb in their homes.

My professional life has always been a challenging one and I confess I wouldn't have it any other way. Therefore, I cannot name the biggest challenge of my career, I prefer to say that all challenges are important when they come.



Doina Vornicu

I am very proud of every single project I was involved in and if I were to mention only one, that would be the wind park that Group CEZ in Romania built at Fantanele and Cogealac.

In this project, displayed in the Dobrogea area, I was the Risk Manager at the largest on-shore wind park in Europe, with a capacity of 600 MW installed power that gathered 240 wind turbines that produce a large portion of the green energy requested by the EU from Romania.

I recall many hours of hard work, taking great risks and many challenges. It was the first project in Europe of this magnitude, it required a special care towards the environment and we had limited time to obtain all approvals and notices needed. The project also benefited from the engagement of many international teams.

In the energy field, a woman needs perseverance and a strong team. I remember working 10 times more than my fellow colleagues to achieve the same results as them or even better ones. Also, the team you work with is very important because success is usually gained by the effort of a team.

In the 90s for instance, the energy field was mostly a male field, but now, it's a domain where women can evolve and put their mark on the next big revolution, which might as well be grid-less energy.

I think that women are very appreciated for their commitment and that large companies like the one I work for, are the best environment that can consolidate and shape a career.

If I were to offer advice to young women in search of a career in Energy, I would say to choose books as best friends from the early stages of their academic preparation and know that people, honor, and perseverance are the key ingredients for building a long-lasting career.

A good example of must read for high-performing women to stay ahead of the curve is Dale Carnegie's "Scrisoare catre unii tineri/ Letter to some young people."



Doina Vornicu

Also, someone else's experience can give you the confidence you need to achieve all your goals. Mentoring can be an inspirational source and stories of success can help its readers draw their own career path.

I think that the attitude towards women being at the helm on important businesses is starting to change and that prejudices tend to appear when the person in question doesn't think she/he is the perfect match for a certain job, therefore, confidence is the key in making someone invest in your career, closely followed by perseverance and hard work. A great leader is most likely to observe the talent of a confident women and to help her advance further the career ladder.

In closing, I would like to share the words that guided me to make the decisions that had the potential to change my life, words written by Nicolae Iorga: "Nu spune niciodată 'nu se poate', ci începe cu 'să vedem' / Never say: "It's not possible." Say instead, "We shall try and see," which also became my favorite motto. ■





Silviya Deyanova

From Austria

I am currently employed as audit expert in the Tariffs Department of the Austrian energy regulator. Describing what I do and where I work to those unfamiliar with the energy business has always been a challenge. I usually say, in my department we calculate the tariffs, even though the work hidden behind this statement is a complex process that attempts to balance the interests of consumers and the interests of network distribution companies. Since I only started working at the Austrian energy regulator less than a year ago, my story will be that of a newcomer.

October 2013: I remember it was my first accounting lecture at Vienna University of Economics and Business Administration, I entered a classroom, looked around and one thing caught my attention, there were almost only women present in the classroom. Being curious about the matter, I started counting and found that out of 30 people attending the class, 23 were women. This astonishing figure made me reanalyze some of my earlier experiences, such as my first energy management lecture at the University of Vienna, which I attended just about a year before. Back then I did not count the people, but now I am quite certain that of about 50 students in the classroom—more than 70 percent— were men.

October 2015: After I obtained my master's in finance and accounting, I started working at a huge auditing company where I was in charge of auditing energy and

utility companies in particular. During this time I had the opportunity to learn a lot and, most importantly, to find out what I really enjoy doing. The actual moment of realization happened when I was auditing one of the biggest DSOs in Vienna. I got so involved with the work that I realized I should focus on the energy sector as much as possible. However, at the time it was very tough to leave financial auditing and completely change career goals.

January 2017: My first audit in the role of the energy regulator was very exciting. I was visiting a small DSO south of Vienna. I entered the conference room where the meeting took place and, somewhat surprisingly, I was the only woman there. All the executives of the DSO were staring at me when I started introducing myself. Maybe they did not take me very seriously at that moment, but by the end of the meeting they were more than surprised and I was able to get all the answers I needed for my audit. My first audit as part of the Austrian energy regulator made me realize how important communication skills are. As a regulator, one should be able to negotiate, to demand information, and at the same time to get the best out of each situation. Since I am a foreigner working for the Austrian energy regulator this has not always been easy for me, but I am constantly working on improving my cultural and communication skills.

Today: I still count myself as a newcomer at the Austrian energy regulator. I have a long and exciting path in front of me, but I will commit my efforts and I will work with the goal of enriching my knowledge.

Work-life balance: In this early stage of my career in energy regulation I have to devote a lot of my time to working, reading, and improving my knowledge of the market and the technical aspects of the business. Time management is extremely important in this case. Until now I have been able to organize my time so that I work hard but still have time for my friends and family. Living abroad does not make this easier, as in order to see my family I need to fly 1,000 kilometers, hence planning is essential, but I know that all my loved ones support me and understand that what I do is very important for my future and for my happiness.

My success: I have always had my 5-year plans. The first one started when I was in high school. My goal was that five years later, I would speak German well and

Silviya Deyanova

would live in a German-speaking country. I achieved both.

The second 5-year plan started when I had already moved to Austria. The plan was to be done with my studies and to have stable job in five years' time. I achieved this as well.

My new 5-year plan is to become an expert in the energy field and build my future family. Well, I have five years to achieve this and I will do my best, so that in five years I can look back and I can say: ACHIEVED.

My mentors and inspiration:

During the last years I have met many inspiring people and I have learned a lot. At the beginning of my career, as a part of the world of accounting and auditing, I developed precision and attention to detail and gained a lot of professional knowledge. However, I must say I am very grateful I was able to enter the world of energy, as the people I met on the way not only taught me about technical and energy-specific matters, but also gave me very valuable insights for my personal growth and development.

A couple of months ago I attended a regulation seminar where I met a girl from Madagascar doing her PhD in electrical engineering in France. When she introduced herself in the auditorium she said that she felt insecure about her future career opportunities in energy, even though in my opinion she was one of the most prominent attendees in the whole seminar. My advice to her and to all young women who pursue a career in energy is not to be afraid. Energy regulation is changing very quickly and there are many strong women who are leaders in the market. They prove that energy is no longer exclusively a man's world, as we all work for a common goal contributing the best of each of us, regardless of gender. Therefore, to succeed, make achievable short-term plans, commit yourself, and achieve them. ■

Silviya Deyanova

Silviya Deyanova started her career as financial accountant and auditor. Only a year ago she joined the Austrian regulator and currently works in the Tariffs Department as audit expert for gas and



Silviya Deyanova

electricity distribution system operators. Originally from Bulgaria, she has lived in Austria for six years. Silviya holds two master's degrees: one in finance and accounting from Vienna University of Economics and Business Administration and one in energy management from the University of Vienna.





Anne Hoskins

From the United States

In 2013 I was appointed to fill an unexpired term on the Maryland Public Service Commission. As that term ended in mid-2016, I wrote an article for ICER, as I looked forward to exploring my next challenge. Now two years later, ICER has asked me for an updated version.

2016 was a time to reflect on the varied positions I had held over my career: energy regulator, energy utility executive, telecommunications lawyer, and governor's policy advisor. I was facing my sixth career transition since I graduated from Harvard Law School, consistent with the experience of an increasing number of professionals in today's economy. In the world of state regulators, the average term for a Commissioner is 3 years—so while regulators often strive to provide consistency and rationality in utility regulation, they must be comfortable with change and uncertainty in their personal lives.

I find career changes both exciting and daunting, but always fulfilling. With each move, I have made new relationships, grown an ever-expanding network of diverse friends and colleagues, and had the opportunity to live in new places. As a mother and wife, I have also always considered the impact of my new opportunities (and related moves) on my husband and our four kids. But in 2016, my move was even more monumental because it coincided with my youngest

Anne Hoskins

child's graduation from high school. For the first time, I did not need to worry about finding a good school or about how my children would manage in a new environment. It was strangely liberating. I have gained so much from parenting and would not trade it for anything, but there is no denying that balancing work and family requires tremendous energy. I saw the beginning of a new chapter, one in which I could concentrate even more energy and attention on my professional career.

It's an exciting time to work in the energy field. Perhaps presciently I attended a "women in solar energy" workshop in the spring of 2016 and was amazed to find a room filled predominantly with women younger than 35. They spoke about the tremendous growth underway in their companies, but also about the "ceilings" some of them were seeing. I thought about the importance of ensuring that the new energy economy, spurred by technology and creativity, would embrace the value of diversity and fully engage the large pool of talented young women graduating from business, law, and engineering schools. One of the challenges mentioned by some of the young women was a lack of mentorship and sponsorship. This is where I believe women of my generation need to step up and provide support to younger women who are striving to build careers in the energy industry. Young women need to be encouraged to take chances and to make time to network and build relationships, both within their organizations and beyond. Most of the opportunities I have had in my career came to fruition not just because I was qualified and worked hard, but because I used my networks from previous jobs, college, graduate school, law school, and politics. In fact, women of all ages need to embrace networking as an essential element of career development and not view it as something unseemly or extraneous.

The ICER Women in Energy network provides a valuable mechanism for mentorship for women regulators. During my first year as a commissioner, I signed up for the WIE mentorship program. To my great benefit, I was assigned to work with another new commissioner and we decided to mentor each other. She became a trusted adviser and friend, and someone I could call at any time to work through a challenge.



Anne Hoskins

It was due to networking with another long-time woman colleague that I learned of the opportunity to serve as Chief Policy Officer at Sunrun after my term expired. Sunrun is the leading residential solar and storage provider in the U.S., and is led by a dynamic woman CEO, Lynn Jurich. The timing and opportunity was perfect for me: I negotiated my new position as I dropped my son off at Syracuse University and headed to the West Coast the following month to join Sunrun. I am now leading a dynamic, committed policy team—that includes many young women who remind me of the young women I met in 2016—and helping to pave the way for a cleaner, more diversified energy sector across the country.

As I look back now at my time as a commissioner and NARUC member, one of my most meaningful initiatives involved my role as Chair of NARUC's International Relations Committee. I focused on supporting the work of NARUC's excellent professional international relations staff and sought ways to engage a broader range of commissioners in NARUC's international activities. I encouraged fellow commissioners to pursue exciting opportunities to make contributions beyond their own states by participating in NARUC's international activities. I also shared my experiences of providing regulatory training in Tanzania and Macedonia, and in cooperating with international regulators at the World Forum on Energy Regulation and the ERRA Energy Investment and Regulation conference. In just one year as a NARUC committee chair, I grew into a much more informed international citizen and, in the process, became a stronger leader.

I was thrilled last month to join the NARUC International Relations Committee again, this time as a guest presenter. I spoke about the lessons the U.S. can learn from Australia and Germany in making rooftop solar less costly and more accessible: reducing permitting and interconnection barriers, and ensuring fair compensation for the electricity provided by solar customers to their neighbors. True to my experience as a Commissioner, I value in my current role understanding energy policy and regulation from around the world, particularly as we work to overcome global challenges, such as climate change and energy security.

At Sunrun, one of our values is to “be the change you wish to see in the world.” Back in March 2016, I had no idea what would come next in my career – or that I would be living and working in California today. But change was inevitable, as my



Anne Hoskins

term of service came to a close. I'm happy to report that I have embraced another transition and am working every day to change our world for the better, too.

Initially written 3/2016 and updated in 2/2018

Anne Hoskins

Anne Hoskins serves as Chief Policy Officer of Sunrun, the largest dedicated residential solar and storage company in the United States. She leads Sunrun's policy efforts to expand consumer access to solar energy and deploy local solar energy that modernizes the grid and benefits all grid users. Anne previously served on the Maryland Public Service Commission where she was a member of the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners (NARUC) Board of Directors, Chair of the NARUC International Relations Committee and a board member of the Organization of PJM States (OPSI). Anne also led federal and state advocacy for an electric and gas utility, and served as a Visiting Research Scholar and Instructor at Princeton University, a telecommunications attorney and as a Governor's policy advisor. She is a graduate of Harvard Law School, the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs at Princeton, and Cornell University.





Sherina Maye Edwards

From the United States

When discussing my job as a state regulatory Commissioner with those unfamiliar with the business, I typically explain that regulators balance the interests of utilities, who seek to recover costs for making multi-million dollar investments, with those of consumers, who want safe and reliable service at affordable rates. We are like referees keeping the playing field between utilities and consumers fair by enforcing the “rules” of the game. While this may sound straightforward enough, many of us know the energy industry is anything but simple.

I was appointed to the Illinois Commerce Commission in February of 2013. I am an attorney by trade and, at that time, I had no exposure to or concept of the vastness of the energy industry and what my role as a regulator would entail. I knew that I paid my electric, gas and water bills, but beyond that I had given hardly any thought to the role of utilities in my daily life. I found the learning curve to be quite steep, and was intimidated by the scope and degree of knowledge that so many in

Sherina Maje Edwards

the industry seemed to possess. At times it felt like I might never get to a point where discussing—let alone ruling on—these complicated and technical issues came easily. However, I was pleasantly surprised by how quickly I became interested in this subject matter that was so foreign to me. This made it easier to dive head-first into my role as a regulator and, though there will always be new and difficult issues to tackle, I haven't looked back since.

As a woman of color and the youngest Illinois commissioner ever appointed, it is not always easy to be a leader in an industry with an aging, male dominated and largely non-diverse workforce. Once I was appointed to the ICC, it didn't take me long to discover that my commitment to diversity and inclusion would continuously merit special time and attention. So, in September of 2014, I founded the Women's Energy Summit as an annual forum for select women across the nation to discuss pertinent issues in the energy industry, highlight accomplishments, uplift rising stars, and break down barriers, whether perceived or real, to the promotion and increase of women in the industry.

The success of the first Women's Energy Summit showed me that there was a real need to create a forum where the work of empowering women in the energy industry could take place on a continual basis as opposed to just at once a year. Shortly after the 2014 Summit, my team set out to find such a forum and learned of the Women's Energy Network (WEN). WEN is an organization of professional women who work across the energy value chain. Its mission is to develop programs to provide networking opportunities and foster career and leadership development of women who work in the energy industries. We learned that while WEN had several chapters throughout the U.S., they had no Midwestern presence. After several months of working with WEN's national team, I co-founded the Chicago chapter of WEN in August of 2015. WEN Chicago has since planned and hosted several events, including networking gatherings, STEM Forums, and professional development workshops.

While it can be challenging and time-consuming to stay on top of my workload as a state regulator, plan the annual Women's Energy Summit, and fulfill my duties as President-Elect of WEN Chicago, the rewards in terms of creating unique spaces for women in this industry to grow, learn and share are immeasurable.



Sherina Maye Edwards

When it comes to unique spaces, many other organizations devoted to the professional development of women in this industry do not have the international component that WIE has. I think that this international element is what sets WIE apart from other industry organizations for women. International experiences are incredibly valuable for professionals at any career level. In May of 2015, through my involvement with the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners (NARUC), and its partnership with the Nigerian Electricity Regulatory Commission (NERC), I traveled to Dubai, UAE, to present at a technical workshop on best practices and approaches in reliability and quality of power. This trip required a great deal of preparation, but ended up being one of the most fulfilling things I've done both personally and professionally as a Commissioner. While NARUC provides a regular space for U.S. regulators to share best practices and discuss industry trends, the international perspectives I gained while in Dubai were unique and unparalleled. I hope that through organizations such as WIE, other women in this industry will be exposed to and take advantage of these types of invaluable international relationships and opportunities.

While there are increasing opportunities and spaces for women, I think the energy industry is still falling short, especially with respect to women in leadership positions. As such, it is important for all organizational cultures to recognize the various demands placed on women both within and outside of the workplace and resist the urge to hold the outside demands against us. While it is difficult for all professionals to balance work and family, women should not disproportionately have to make sacrifices in order to be successful and fulfilled wives, mothers, sisters, daughters, co-workers, supervisors, executive leaders. Career-life balance should not be treated and/or perceived as a zero sum game. It is important for company leaders to remember this in order to retain the best talent across the industry.

In terms of attracting talent, I believe that drawing women into the energy sector begins with making STEM subjects attractive for girls early in their education. Many of the best jobs in our industry require a background in science, technology, engineering and/or mathematics, yet these are not always the subjects that girls and women are drawn to or told that they can excel at when they envision careers



Sherina Maye Edwards

for themselves. However, research does show that women are typically drawn to careers where they feel that their work contributes to local, national, and global communities in positive and meaningful ways. It appears to me that there is a pervasive perception problem in that women do not identify STEM careers as those that have these desired impacts. If we can work to publicize the profound effects STEM and energy careers have on humanity, this would be big step towards not only attracting women to the industry, but also retaining them.

For young women currently finding their way in the energy sector, my advice is to never be complacent and to always think about where you want to be professionally a year, five years, and ten years down the road. All of us should not only constantly set short- and long-term goals, but also strategize as to how we can make our current job, assignments, or projects get us closer to achieving those goals. The key to a successful career is building and maintaining a strong professional network. I often say that your network is your “net worth,” and I truly believe this. I have the privilege of working with and among countless knowledgeable and kind people. Nurturing, sustaining and growing these relationships over the years has proven to be a mutually beneficial strategy for me; I gain so much from my network of friends and colleagues and I hope that they, in turn, feel that I add value to their professional endeavors when called upon to do so.

Additionally, it is incredibly important for women leaders to mentor younger women in any industry. I have several mentees and also established an internship program at the Commission where I introduce female law students to the energy industry in the hope that they love it enough to return to it. I’m happy to say that my first intern is now my legal and policy advisor, and my 4th intern is currently working within the ICC’s Office of General Counsel. My commitment to mentorship comes from my own good fortune in having several admirable female mentors throughout my career.

As leaders, men also need to advocate for and mentor women with potential. Because there are so many more males in positions of leadership in our industry, men need to do their part to move the needle forward. If capable women aren’t being given the attention or grooming they deserve to succeed, excel, and advance, organizations and ultimately our entire industry will lose out on massive



Sherina Maye Edwards

amounts of great talent. In other words, it doesn't just make sense to uplift women, it makes dollars.

From grid modernization efforts to countless technological innovations changing the way we consume, generate and store energy, it's certainly an exciting time to be a professional in the utility space. While there is always room for more visibility, women have undoubtedly made their mark on the energy industry worldwide. I am beyond confident that women will continue to achieve great things, attain leadership positions, and add incalculable value to the electrifying changes coming down the industry pipeline. ■

Sherina Maye Edwards

Sherina Maye Edwards is now a partner in the law firm of Quarles & Brady, based in Chicago, Illinois, USA. As a member of the firm's Energy, Environment & Natural Resources Practice Group, she focuses her practice on electric reliability, water, natural gas and critical infrastructure issues. An energy professional with solid regulatory experience which includes analyzing, formulating, and implementing public policy at the state level, she brings a wealth of knowledge on issues affecting the energy and public utility industry including grid modernization, natural gas infrastructure, cybersecurity, reliability and supplier and workforce diversity.

Prior to joining the firm, Edwards served a five year term on the Illinois Commerce Commission (ICC), making her the youngest commissioner ever appointed in the state of Illinois. While she served as commissioner, she was involved with the National Association for Regulatory Utility Commissioners (NARUC), serving as the Chair of the Subcommittee on Pipeline Safety as well as Chair of the Subcommittee on Supplier and Workforce Diversity and as a member of the Committee on Gas, with previous service on the Water Committee.

In 2016, Edwards was appointed by President Barack Obama and U.S. Secretary of Transportation, Anthony Foxx as Co-Chair of the U.S. Department of Transportation's Voluntary Information-Sharing System Working Group, which was created in accordance with the Pipelines Hazardous and Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) guidelines, where she provided recommendations to the Secretary of Transportation on information-sharing matters and best practices for the protection of proprietary and security-sensitive information.

Having founded both the Women's Energy Summit and the Women's Energy Network of Chicago as well as having strong influence over the creation of the Illinois Utilities Business Diversity Council



Sherina Maye Edwards

and the ICC's Office of Diversity and Community Affairs, Edwards is nationally recognized for being a champion for diversity and inclusion within the utility and energy space.

Edwards was recently selected as a 2017 Eisenhower Fellow, where she served as an ambassador for the United States in South Africa and Australia, met with leading experts in the energy industry, and learned more about the shift to renewable energy. In addition to several civic boards, Edwards sits on the Board of Directors for Intren, LLC, a national construction company that primarily services the electric and gas industries.



Karen Morton

From Canada/UK

Staying connected and engaged in your work after many years can be a challenge, even with lots of opportunities to participate in a variety of projects and regulatory challenges. I have a long history of working for Canada's National Energy Board: I was a modeller, a natural gas market analyst (with a few projects in oil, natural gas liquids, and electricity), a technical specialist, and the director of energy trade. I wanted to be a catalyst for change, as I was growing weary of polarized energy dialogs.

My yearning to be a part of change led me to apply for and win a Chevening Scholarship, provided by the UK's Foreign Commonwealth Office for future global leaders to study in the UK. My winning application proposed studying Media and Communications at the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE), with the goal to shape new energy conversations. I knew my organization would also benefit from me gaining new perspectives on energy and communication for a digitally connected world. In 2015, I began a journey from director to student in a new programme with the LSE's Media and Communications Department: Data and Society. That started the biggest challenge of my career so far.

The WIE mentorship program is extremely helpful for addressing transition apprehension. I had been involved with WIE as a mentor to a young analyst with



Karen Morton

Ofgem and when I knew I was going to be a student, I requested to switch roles and be a mentee myself. My mentor, Valeria Termini, Commissioner of the Italian Regulatory Authority for Electricity Gas and Water (AEEGSI), had previously been a professor of Economics at the University of Roma Tre. We spent our mentoring time discussing transitions, particularly between regulatory work and academia. Following a WIE webinar, Dr. Kenneth Hill, director of the Tennessee Regulatory Authority, reached out to share his experiences of returning to school and learning with students. The support of two well-established ICER members were valuable to mentally and emotionally prepare me. Learning about their experiences gave me inspiration to make the journey my own.

The generosity of my mentors helped me to reach out to others. I contacted a former colleague and industry executive, who had, years before, taken leave to get a PhD. We discussed personal growth and returning to work after an educational leave. She provided me with a London industry contact through which I connected with other women leaders in the energy industry through the UK's POWERful Women organization.

Recognizing the importance of diversity in leadership, in my opinion, would help organizations keep more talented women and help them to advance their careers. My family and I lived at Goodenough College, an amazing post-graduate residential college in the heart of London, with residents from over 80 countries. Being part of both Goodenough and the Chevening Scholar communities gave me the benefit of exposure to new cultures and ideas and forms of leadership in many different aspects of life. Diplomats, judges, business people, and military leaders joined us often at Goodenough to discuss leadership and their successes and failures. In this community, I shared my experience and perspectives on the Canadian energy landscape by giving an evening seminar with one of my Canadian LSE classmates and I participated in a weekend seminar series on cultural diplomacy and soft power in Dublin, Ireland.

I found valuable direction and examples of leadership and engagement from theatre and opera directors, members of the clergy and my fellow scholars. The Chevening Scholarship program offered a variety of valuable leadership sessions and events, including a women's leadership workshop and lessons on social media



Karen Morton

for diplomatic purposes. I participated in a week-long Women of the Future conference that emphasized the roles of kindness and collaboration amongst women leaders. These inspiring activities showed me what diversity really offers for leadership.

The role of diversity of skills and perspectives was further revealed in my studies and dissertation work. I gained greater understanding of how people from different countries view energy policies of Canada, how they engage with digital technologies and with the UK government's open data program. I chose open data as the focus of my dissertation research because I knew the Canadian government had recently launched a Directive on Open Government.

I thought my challenge would be my lack of programming and data skills—as a director, I delegated analytical tasks to others and lost my skills. I worried that I would not be able to relate well enough to the topic and the subject matter experts. But, in fact, I learned my non-technical perspective on the subject was invaluable, as I relate to many citizens and government workers. Data literacy and skills are problems for both groups.

My research examined partnerships between communities, government, and technical experts and how this ecosystem approach has been effective. I examined the role can citizens have in producing energy knowledge using open data. In this research, I interviewed government workers, journalists, data developers, and NGOs that specialize in open data. What struck me was the enthusiasm for the principles and engagement opportunities offered by open data and the need for a healthy ecosystem of actors and skills: government, data scientists, citizens, and industry. Through these relationships, knowledge transfer and development can flourish through collaboration between citizens with context for problems/issues, technical specialists to help work with data, including assisting government, and government and industry who have access to the data and policy expertise.

I was extremely proud of my dissertation work and now as I sit within a regulatory role again, working to support Canada's Directive on Open Government, I realize that new energy dialogues will happen when we become open and porous with our knowledge. I ask myself whether data is truth, or merely a language that some

Karen Morton

of us speak better than others? How should we communicate with our data to foster deeper engagement? We need to help facilitate digital and data literacy skills to avoid creating a data elite. And what would it mean to regulators if nobody owns the truth?

Today I'm still on my journey. In trying to lead change in open data delivery and engagement with data, I had to work on the fundamentals of data management and understanding internal and external users' needs and desires. I'm learning from my local civic tech community, Data For Good, and the Innovations in Visualizations Lab at the University of Calgary. I've participated in several datathons, where volunteers meet to perform analytics for not-for-profit agencies. This work really reveals how the data ecosystem and an open mindset works to improve data quality and analytics for organizations to evaluate performance and effectiveness.

Today I'm excited about my new role as a project manager in a large data acquisition project – one that combines understanding and addressing the needs of internal and external users, regulation, open data, standards, IT, and engagement with other regulators and industry.

My advice to women in the energy and regulatory fields is to follow your passion and curiosity. Listen and be porous. I highly recommend study in a different country, as moving away from your comfort zone, your familiar landscape, and perspective to be invaluable experience. ■

Karen Morton

Karen Morton is currently Director of the Energy Trade Team at the National Energy Board. She oversees the analysis and processing of all energy export orders, licences, and permits, and the monthly reporting of authorization holders. She has been with the Board for over 15 years in a variety of roles including leading energy demand modeling for the Board's Energy Futures report, and technical specialist of market analysis. Prior to working for the NEB, Karen worked for the Canadian Energy Research Institute and the B.C. Ministry of Forests. Karen holds a Bachelor's degree in Economics and a Master of Science in Forest Economics. Karen is a member of the United Way of Calgary's cabinet and Chair of the Steering Committee for Calgary's Government of Canada Workplace Charitable Campaign.





Commissioner
Ann
Rendahl
From the United States

In 2001, when a major hearing before the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission threatened to drag on into the night, the administrative law judge, who was at the time a new mother, faced a decision working parents still grapple with to this day: what to do when the daycare is closed but the work is not finished. When the hearing participants requested to carry on and not prolong the hearing an additional day, then Administrative Law Judge Ann Rendahl had a choice to make, recess the hearing until the next day to care for her son Nathan, or bring him to the hearing.

With open arms, attorneys and stakeholders all took turns caring for the baby, while Ann, now a commissioner of the Washington Commission, presided over the case. A move that today may have gone ‘viral’ made all the difference then for Commissioner Rendahl.

While pursuing her master’s degree in public policy at the Goldman School of Public Policy at University of California Berkeley, Ann took a macroeconomics class that explored rate design and the elasticity of demand with inclining rate blocks, sparking her interest in the economics of energy. During her first year of law school at Hastings College of Law, she pursued an internship in the legal department of

Ann Rendahl

the California Public Utilities Commission and that was all it took. She's worked for regulatory commissions ever since.

Her first job after law school was with the Washington State Attorney General's office representing the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission. She later joined the UTC as an administrative law judge. After rising to the director of the Administrative Law Division, and then of the Policy and Legislative Division, Ann was appointed as a commissioner in January 2015.

Ann has spent her career balancing her work life with the demands of home and her three children, who are now in college and high school. "My mother held a college degree in math and astronomy, and was required to leave her job at IBM when she was pregnant in the early 1960's. While she did not work again until my siblings and I were in middle school, she always encouraged us to find our paths, achieve our goals, including having a family."

"I've found the biggest challenge facing women in our field is the need to be recognized as equals, and heard when we have something to say," says Commissioner Rendahl. "While this dynamic is changing, it is still difficult to feel comfortable speaking up on issues that matter to women, especially in industries where we are underrepresented, like energy."

As commissioner of a state public utility commission, Ann is charged with balancing the needs of consumers with the requirement of utility and transportation companies to provide safe, reliable, and affordable services.

Dedicating her career to public service, Ann's balancing act doesn't stop at work. While she has had the full support of her husband and family, over the last 23 years working with the UTC, she has put in long nights after the kids go to bed and sacrificed countless weekends to get the work done.

"Families are faced with tough choices when it comes to the delicate balance of work and family, and we must continue to advocate for working conditions that recognize the reality of our situations."



Ann Rendahl

In the workplace, where women are still underrepresented in technical fields, Ann stresses the importance of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) education for young girls.

“By participating in science, engineering and math studies, more girls can have the confidence to participate in the technical conversations and initiatives happening in these fields,” says Ann. “But technical knowledge must be paired with the opportunity to participate in the work.”

Ann is currently the chair of the California Independent System Operator’s Energy Imbalance Market Body of State Regulators, which provides a role for state regulators to participate in the governance of the Energy Imbalance Market developing in the Western states. In this role, Ann is contributing her unique perspective. Using skills she has gained in leading hearings and facilitating settlement discussions and workshops, she is fostering a vital conversation between state regulators in order to assist state utility regulators in understanding organized markets, and determining how state regulators will play a key part in the burgeoning energy imbalance market and the development of a western regional transmission operator.

“It’s so important for programs like Women in Energy to give women a chance to collectively navigate a historically male-dominated industry and share experiences,” says Rendahl. “I feel honored to be part of the continued upward movement of women within the energy sector.”

In order to change organizational cultures to keep women in the workforce, Ann believes the intersection of environmental studies with improved STEM education curriculum will be the catalyst to increase interest in the energy industry.

“The younger generation is interested in economic development and more attuned to the needs of the environment. They see how mastering skills in science, math, and engineering can result in new and more efficient ways of producing, transmitting, and distributing energy,” says Rendahl. “If we can continue this momentum and growth, we will attract more women to energy and energy regulatory careers.”



Ann Rendahl

Ann's advice for young women in the energy sector? "Project confidence in everything you do." ■

Ann Rendahl

Ann Rendahl was appointed to the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission (UTC) by Gov. Inslee in December 2014 for a six year term. She previously was the Director of Policy and Legislation for the UTC.

Prior to leading the UTC's Policy and Legislative Affairs Section, Ann served as the Director of the Administrative Law Division, as an administrative law judge for the UTC, and as an assistant attorney general representing the Utilities and Transportation Division.

Ann currently serves on the Electricity and Critical Infrastructure Committees for the National Association of Regulatory Commissioners (NARUC). She recently served as co-chair of NARUC's Task Force on Transportation, focusing on railroad safety issues. She serves as the vice-chair of the Body of State Regulators for the California ISO's Energy Imbalance Market, having served as the chair from 2015 to 2017. Ann also serves as the chair of the Western Renewable Energy Generation Information System (WREGIS) Committee.

Ann is a graduate of Wellesley College and received a master's degree in Public Policy from the Graduate School of Public Policy at the University of California, Berkeley. She received her law degree from Hastings College of the Law, University of California, San Francisco. Ann and her husband, Paul Sachs, have three children, Sarah, Sam and Nathan.



Imron Bhatti

From the United States

More than 20 percent of America's carbon emissions come from residential buildings.¹ American homes, especially those built before 1970, contribute to carbon pollution through inefficiencies in energy use that burden the climate, the taxpayer, and American households.

Because the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) directly and indirectly subsidizes utility costs for its low-income program participants, the federal government spends nearly \$6.5 billion on residential energy costs each year.² These costs reduce the limited resources that might otherwise fund housing and services for the growing number of American renter households paying more than 30 percent of their income on rent.³

1 Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard Univ., *The State of the Nation's Housing 2015*. <http://www.jchs.harvard.edu/sites/jchs.harvard.edu/files/jchs-sonhr-2015-ch6.pdf>.

2 U.S. Dep't of Housing & Urban Dev., *FY 2013 Annual Performance Report/FY 2015 Annual Performance Plan*. http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/documents/huddoc?id=HUD_FY13APR_FY15APP.PDF.

3 *The State of the Nation's Housing 2015*, supra note 1.

Whereas average rents in apartments increased by less than eight percent between 2001 and 2009, energy costs for those renters increased by nearly 23 percent.⁴ Low-income women are especially affected, since nearly 80 percent of HUD-assisted households are headed by females.⁵ Beyond easing the financial strain on these households, lowering energy costs through efficiency retrofits and holistic planning brings job opportunities and improvements to resident health and safety.⁶

Against this backdrop, it is fitting that women at HUD and in the affordable housing sector are focused on increasing energy efficiency in affordable housing at every level—from working with residents at affordable housing projects to developing policy at the federal level. Meet five women working to make affordable homes more energy efficient.

Mara Blitzer, senior policy advisor to the head of HUD's Office of Multifamily Housing, has a varied background in affordable real estate housing development. She exemplifies the cross-sector collaboration necessary to move the needle on energy efficiency.

"I usually say that I work in affordable housing development," Blitzer says, "then I add 'with a focus on energy efficiency.'" Blitzer's work includes the Better Buildings Challenge, a federal initiative spearheaded by the US Department of Energy to encourage and help commercial and residential property owners bring down energy consumption. While HUD is increasingly placing emphasis on this important goal, the siloed nature of federal policy work still presents a challenge.

4 U.S. Dep't of Housing & Urban Dev., "Quantifying Energy Efficiency in Multifamily Rental Housing," Evidence Matters, Summer 2011. <http://www.huduser.org/portal/periodicals/em/summer11/highlight1.html>.

5 U.S. Dep't of Housing & Urban Dev., Picture of Subsidized Households 2013. <http://www.huduser.org/portal/datasets/picture/yearlydata.html>.

6 Deutsche Bank Americas Foundation, The Benefits of Energy Efficiency in Multifamily Affordable Housing. https://www.db.com/usa/docs/DBLC_Recognizing_the_Benefits_of_Efficiency_Part_B_1.10.pdf.

“My biggest challenge has been being the only person in my division or organization that is tasked with energy efficiency goals. That can be lonely,” says Blitzer. “I’ve needed to compensate by finding a professional network outside of my home base to find compatriots with whom I can share strategies and successes.”

Networking is very important to professional success in this field generally, and these women stressed the importance of connecting with other women in the field to furthering their work and careers.

Ophelia Basgal, currently HUD’s regional administrator in San Francisco, served previously as the vice president of community relations for Pacific Gas and Electric (PG&E), one of the USA’s largest utilities. “While my career in energy was in a non-technical role, my biggest challenge was learning the complexities of service delivery,” she said, “I had tremendous mentors in the company that helped me overcome that hurdle.”

Basgal stresses the importance of mentorship for women in energy. “I applaud any formal or informal mentoring opportunity, especially woman to woman opportunities as the industry leaderships tends to be dominated by men,” she said, speaking of WiE’s pilot e-mentoring program for women. “Everyone benefits when women are well represented in the leadership of any industry. Building knowledge and support through collaboration with others is key to building that leadership representation.”

Blitzer agrees. “I think networking and mentorship are key to attracting women to the energy sector and helping them progress,” she said. “For those of us who are already where we want to be, we can spot and encourage those who are similarly passionate about the work. Organizationally, we need to create spaces where employees are comfortable asking for what they want and what they need.”

That organizational change starts with leadership, but it’s ultimately about “pushing that leadership down,” says Linda Mandolini, the executive director of Eden Housing, a developer providing affordable housing for more than 65,000 residents in California. Although Eden has been at the forefront of energy efficiency in affordable multifamily housing since the 1970s, to fully align the

Imron Bhatti

company's social values with cost concerns took buy-in from every level of the staff. Mandolini also stresses the importance of figuring out how to help women stay in high-level roles and have families. While many employers have made great strides in this field, "we have not yet figured this out."

Crystal Bergemann, senior energy analyst with HUD's Office of Economic Resilience, and Monica Watkins, the director of energy and environmental programs at the Housing Authority of Baltimore County (HABC), exemplify the challenge of maintaining thriving home and professional lives in workplaces that are not structured with that balance in mind.

Bergemann has a two-year-old and a four-month-old at home. "It's hard to leave for work in the morning sometimes!" she said. "But I want my children to see that I'm making a difference on an issue I care about: making homes more energy efficient and increasing access to clean energy for all Americans."

Watkins leveraged her background in engineering and finance to build the HABC's first Energy Department. With that department, Watkins executed a \$56 million energy conservation initiative across 3,700 low-income residential units. She has done all this as single mother. "My early years as a swim mom and then later as a basketball mom were the most challenging to keep the balance. There was always time carved out for a PTA night, fundraisers, swim meets, and then basketball tournaments. Achieving this on a relatively successful scale meant I had to be organized, strategic and forgiving of myself and others when things didn't go as planned. It wasn't perfect, however when I look back over it all I have to say I was able to achieve the career success and the parental success I wanted."

"To keep women in the workforce I believe they need to have schedule flexibility," says Watkins. "To assist talented women in advancing further and faster up the career ladder I would recommend identifying the relevant skill set in these women and then pairing them up with the right project or opportunity to show case their skills. Give them credit for handling difficult tasks and help them build the confidence they need to continue advancing in their careers."

Since women are under-represented in energy, men play a key role in opening doors for women in the field. "You're not going to be very successful if the leaders



Imron Bhatti

of your industry only represent a tiny sliver of the overall demographic you're trying to reach," said Bergemann. "Because energy issues affect all of us, we need to be inclusive and diverse in our leadership in the sector, or we'll never have the far reaching impact we want to see. That means making space for women's voices, but also other underrepresented voices like those belonging to people of color and low-income communities."

Basgal speaks proudly of the work that women at HUD and the nonprofit housing sector have achieved in not only increasing energy efficiency in affordable housing, but also promoting energy conservation with the families who reside in the units. "Hopefully we've been good role models for women who are interested in the myriad of opportunities available in the energy fields, whether it's energy policy, research, delivery of energy services, or actually installing solar panels! All of us look forward to other women joining us in these efforts." ■

Imron Bhatti

Imron Bhatti is a Presidential Management Fellow at the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Among his varied workload, Imron has supported efforts to incentivize owners of affordable rental housing to make energy efficient upgrades.

Mara Blitzer

Mara Blitzer is Senior Policy Advisor to the Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Office of Multifamily Housing Programs at the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Her work consists of advising the Secretary regarding energy, senior housing, and homelessness policies in addition to supporting the Director of the Program Administration Office in efforts to approach policy development in a strategic and transparent manner and to make multifamily programs and services responsive to stakeholder feedback. Prior to starting government service, Mara worked for fifteen years as a developer of affordable and supportive housing in the San Francisco Bay Area and New York City.

Ophelia Basgal

Ophelia Basgal is currently a visiting scholar at the University of California Terner Center for Housing Innovation and a senior executive coach with InclusionINC, a leading global consulting organization specializing in inclusion and diversity solutions. Prior to her current positions, she was the Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) Region IX Regional Administrator from May 2010 to March 2016 overseeing a staff of 700 serving the states of Arizona, California, Hawaii and Nevada and the outer Pacific islands. Before joining HUD, she was Vice President of Community Relations at PG&E where she managed the company's \$20 million charitable contributions program



Imron Bhatti

and oversaw the company's community engagement programs, partnerships with community-based organizations, and employee volunteerism program for 20,000+ employees. Her current professional and community service includes the Board of Retirement of the Alameda County Employees' Retirement Association, the Board of Directors of the San Francisco Foundation, the Board of Trustees of Mills College and the Public Policy Institute Statewide Leadership Council. She holds a master's degree in social welfare administration from the University of California.

Crystal Bergemann

Crystal Bergemann is the Energy Team Lead in HUD's Office of Economic Resilience where she works to embed sustainable and green building policies and practices into HUD's portfolio. Additionally, she is HUD's program lead on the Renew300 initiative, which is a goal of increasing onsite renewable energy capacity in federally assisted housing nine-fold by 2020. Crystal has a background in energy and water policy, and received a Master of Public Administration from New York University's Wagner School of Public Service.

Linda Mandolini

Linda Mandolini has served as President of Eden Housing for 16 years, with prior positions as Director of Real Estate Development and Project Developer. Under her strong leadership, Eden Housing has become one of the most productive and successful nonprofit affordable housing developers in California. Linda oversees affordable housing production, resident support services, and property management, and a staff of 382 employees.

Since Linda became President, the organization has received numerous awards including being named as one of the Best Places to Work in the Bay Area in 2012, 2015, 2016 and 2017, and Healthiest Employers in the Bay Area by the San Francisco Business Journal for the past six years in a row (2012-2017).

Linda is a leader in housing policy on the local, state and national level. She serves or has served on the Boards of: The Housing Trust of Silicon Valley, Non-Profit Housing Association of Northern California (NPH), California Housing Consortium (CHC), National Housing Conference (NHC), Make Room, Enterprise Communities' Community Leadership Council, and International Housing Policy Exchange.

Linda held various community development positions in Boston prior to moving to California in 1996.

Linda was inducted into the Alameda County Women's Hall of Fame in 2017 and has been honored with the 2016 SF Business Times Forever Influential Honor Roll, 2015 SF Business Times "Bay Area's Most Influential Women" award, 2014 SF Business Times "Bay Area's Most Influential Women" award, 2011 SF Business Times "Bay Area's Most Influential Women" award, 2011 SF Business Times "Northern California Real Estate Women of Influence" award, 2011 Affordable Housing Management Association (AHMA) Pioneer Award, and 2008 East Bay Business Times "Women of Distinction" award.



Imron Bhatti

Linda received her A.B. from Wheaton College in Massachusetts, and earned an M.B.A. at Boston University. In her free time, Linda is an avid bicyclist and frequently rides for charitable causes.

Monica Watkins

Monica Watkins holds both an MBA in Finance from Loyola College as well as a BS in Mechanical Engineering from the University of Maryland College Park. She is also a 1989 graduate of the Baltimore Polytechnic Institute. Monica has over 18 years of local utility experience in the areas of gas engineering & construction, energy accounting & billing and electric policy, rates & regulations. Additionally, Ms. Watkins is a member of the Association of Energy Engineers, a Certified Energy Manager (CEM) and a Certified Measurement and Verification Professional (CMVP). She has presented case studies and papers on HABCs energy performance contracting initiatives and resident energy awareness and conservation programs at both the World Energy Engineering Congress and for the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Since September 2006, Monica has overseen energy and environmental projects. These projects range in complexity from simple lighting and water measures to complex heating distribution replacement and Building Energy Management Systems. Her department is responsible for managing and monitoring HABC's (1) energy consumption and utilities costs; (2) security initiatives; (3) construction inspection services; and (4) lead and asbestos monitoring. Monica manages a staff of 19 who are responsible for energy performance contracting initiatives; Closed Circuit TV camera installations & analysis; environmental monitoring, analysis & abatement; the monitoring and inspection of all construction activities; and, utility analysis & energy conservation. The primary mission of Monica's department is to reduce energy and water consumption; and improve environmental conditions for our residents. As such, a key component of the department's responsibility is installing, maintaining and monitoring utility sub metering. Under Monica's leadership the agency has successfully transitioned over 3000 residents to a energy consumption management system that details their daily electric usage. Future initiatives include submetering both gas and water utilities where feasible. To assist in this transition Monica's staff regularly engage the resident population with monthly utility usage surveys, resident meetings, and even a video production to encourage residents to be mindful of their consumption.



Share Your Story in the ICER Chronicle

The ICER Chronicle is a bi-annual, online publication packed with interesting articles about energy and regulation. A dedicated section is devoted to Women in Energy “stories”.

Share your professional expertise by submitting an article on regulatory issues or tell your story for the Women in Energy Story section. Stories can be about anything relevant to WIE such as challenges women faced in their careers; pioneering work they have undertaken; obstacles they overcame and the lessons that can be shared.

Interested in submitting a story to the ICER Chronicle?

Submit your paper (as a Word document) to chronicle@icer-regulators.net.



Women in Energy

The ICER International Network



Credits

Editor: Beatriz Estrada Moreno

Design: Lisa Mathias

Editorial Board: WIE Steering Group

Special thanks to: Una Shortall, Martina Schusterova, Erin Hammel, Katherine Bennett, Regina L. Davis, Robert McMahon, and Yejide Olutosin.