



November 2020

Upcoming Events

November 2020

WTS Greater NY and WTS Philadelphia Fall Panel- Advancing Equity in Transportation in the Northeast

November 18, 2020 | 5:30 pm - 7:00 pm

Please join the WTS Greater New York chapter in conjunction with the WTS Philadelphia chapter, for an interactive discussion about what the Northeast is doing to advance equity in transportation and how our industry can help underserved communities.

Register [here](#).

Watch Party: Neuroscience of Implicit Bias

Join the WTS Young Professionals for a Watch-Along event in mid-November! Inspired by the two-part workshop hosted by WTS-GNY earlier this summer regarding the Neuroscience of Implicit Bias, this Watch Party will feature a Ted Talk by Kimberly Papillon. Kimberly is a nationally recognized expert on the subject of judicial and legal decision-making, and she speaks to the neuroscience behind how unconscious processes and implicit associations may influence decision making. Following the video, we will meet virtually for a moderated Q/A session. Stay tuned for the official announcement of this event coming to your inbox soon!

December 2020

WTS-GNY Lunch and Learn Series

December 3, 2020 | 12:00pm - 1:00 pm

Please join us during your lunch break for our Professional Development Lunch and Learn Series. This series is to bring together members, potential members, colleagues and peers from across the region to collaborate and learn from each other. Our first virtual series will focus on Career Advancement. We have four dynamic women who will offer their advice, experience, expertise and guidance to increase your professional value. The

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guest speakers include **Yvonne Lopez-Diaz**, *Career Coaching*, **Colleen Leahy** - *Re-Entering the workplace* **Teresa Walters** *Career Change and Transition* and **Chitra Radin** - *Creating your own business*.

Register [here](#)

Book Club Meeting

December 10, 2020 | 6:30 pm-9:00 pm

Get ready for the next book club meeting. We will be discussing "My Own Words" by Ruth Bader Ginsberg, Mary Harnett and Wendy W. Williams.

Register [here](#).

2020 WTS-GNY Annual Gala

By: *Daniella Bernett, Sarah Colker and Desiree Gazzo*

Although 2020 will be marked by tragedy and loss, it will be heralded as a year of resilience and adaptation in the face of obstacles on many different levels. Bolstered by this spirit to advance and make the best of things, WTS-GNY on October 22nd held its 18th Annual Gala to celebrate Woman of the Year Clarelle DeGraffe, director and general manager of the PATH Rail Transit System at the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey (PANYNJ). The event also commemorated the formation of the chapter 40 years ago, its recent accomplishments and its vision for the future. Despite being the first virtual gala because of the pandemic, industry enthusiasm was as strong as ever as exhibited by the 170 attendees from across the metropolitan region.

After an introduction by WTS-GNY President Keri Cibelli, the 40th Year Celebration Video highlighted how the chapter has evolved, growing in stature as its members forged personal and professional relationships that endure to this day. The video also sought to show how the industry can become better, when members reach out to support one another. The underlying message was that when one succeeds, myriad possibilities open up for everyone. The video featured memories and reflections from Maxine Finkelstein, the founding chapter president, Susan Gilbert, the founding vice president, Catherine Sweeney, the founding treasurer, past presidents Beth DeAngelo and Marcia Shapiro, Keri Cibelli, and Portia Henry, former board member. Clarelle DeGraffe, Cheryl McKissack Daniel, president and CEO of McKissack & McKissack, and Sally Librera, HNTB vice president of Strategic Planning and Client Support, shared their thoughts and aspirations for WTS on the video as well.

The Gala is the time when WTS-GNY bestows its Scholarship awards to remarkable students, who demonstrate the potential to excel in the transportation field. McKissack announced the 2020 recipients and gave a brief overview of

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their backgrounds and expertise. The winners were Diana Ramirez-Rios, Srushti Rath, Sofia Duran, Odette Dominguez and Helena Oiwa. The scholarship recipients' tremendous pride at being honored by WTS was on display in a video with their acceptance messages.

The evening transitioned from tomorrow's leaders to NYCDOT Commissioner Polly Trottenberg, a special guest speaker who explained how she treasures WTS. She first became involved with WTS, while serving in the Obama administration. She had an opportunity to visit chapters around the nation. She reminisced about meaningful exchanges with other transportation leaders at WTS and the networks that were built as an outgrowth of these personal contacts. She noted that the New York chapter stood out most. Trottenberg discussed the challenges of rising from a behind-the-scenes staffer to a woman, who is the face of a major agency. Women often have to overcome many hurdles to reach such a level of responsibility. She agreed with DeGraffe's observation in the 40th Anniversary video that "sometimes we need to do things our own way and find our own mentors and role models." In her closing comments, Trottenberg noted that while the transportation sector has been decimated by the coronavirus, DeGraffe, whom she dubbed "a shining star" with her own particular leadership style, has been an extraordinary role model to women, colleagues and the industry.

Librera discussed how everyone is coping with the surreal situation the world is plunged into at the moment; the need to solve problems together; optimism about the future; and the inclusivity of WTS and the forum it provides. Librera, who was vice president of Subways at the MTA at the outset of the pandemic, paid tribute to the heroic agency employees who came and continue to report to work during the crisis. She pointed out the power of micro forces, loyalty to co-workers and their value to the City. Librera encouraged the audience to think about how individuals can make connections through daily micro actions with those around them. Librera segued by introducing Clarelle DeGraffe as the Woman of the Year. With such qualities as intelligence, strength, compassion and sincerity, she said that DeGraffe is the embodiment of leadership. She added that DeGraffe is generous with her time and seeks to develop those working around her.

The program concluded with a presentation by DeGraffe, who began with a few words recalling a pivotal moment in her career. It was a story about emulating the attributes of women leaders that she met through WTS and friendships formed with her mentors that will remain with her for the rest of her life. In addition, DeGraffe talked about this unprecedented year which was plagued by the pandemic, and racial and political unrest and protest, and where true leaders displayed the importance of working together and thinking of others a little bit more.

DeGraffe offered a quote from Dr. Martin Luther King, "The

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ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in the moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy." She thanked PANYNJ Executive Director Rick Cotton and Chairman Kevin O'Toole for their pivotal stewardship at the agency in the darkest of times, as well as her PATH colleagues and her family. DeGraffe concluded by asserting that each of us is a Person of the Year because no one has been left unscathed. Each individual has persevered and moved forward with compassion, putting others before oneself. Once the formal program ended, attendees moved into networking breakout rooms to share recollections about their WTS experiences, catch up with old friends, and make new connections that will enhance themselves and the chapter. For the Annual Gala Journal and 40th Year Anniversary Video, please use the following [link](#).

WTS-GNY YP Trending Topics Series - Navigating Professional Uncertainty

On Thursday, October 29th, the WTS Young Professionals Committee hosted a virtual panel discussion on navigating professional uncertainty. A big thank you to our panelists: Yvonne Lopez-Diaz (HNTB Vice President, National Workforce Pursuits Strategist) and Lisa Santoro (AICP and Senior Analyst, LTK Engineering Services) for supporting our members and attendees through sharing personal experiences and advice. These accomplished ladies discussed a range of topics from what to expect when job searching during an economic downturn, what questions to consider when deciding if a company is a good fit for you, and important considerations when thinking of starting a family. Our panelists suggested not to shy away from asking someone you admire to be your mentor, and provided ideas to get creative with maintaining and expanding your professional network in a more virtual world. A big thank you to everyone who participated, and for all the great questions that led to an inspiring discussion!

Scholarship Fundraising

Every year WTS-GNY raises money for the student scholarship fund, culminating with a lively fundraising event held during the Annual Gala. This year, because the Gala was virtual, WTS-GNY used an online application to both raise funds and track the success. As of the end of October, the chapter raised slightly under \$4,000 of its \$5,000 goal. This scholarship fundraising event will last until Friday November 11, 2020. For those who did not have a chance to



donate, the link to the online donation form and the tracking thermometer are below. To all those who have already contributed - thank you!

Donate [here](#)

Transportation Job Opportunities

WTS-GNY would like to be a resource for women seeking positions in transportation and firms looking for candidates.

If your firm would like to post a position, fill out our [job form](#). We will share your job opportunity on our LinkedIn Page and in our next Chapter News as well as our website.

Employer New Jersey Transit
Job Title Senior Director, Design Services
How to Apply [Website](#)
Deadline Open until vacancy filled

Employer Port Authority of New York and New Jersey
Job Title Manager, Airport Landside Facility Planning
How to Apply [Website](#)
Deadline Open until vacancy filled

Employer HNTB
Job Title Project Director
How to Apply [Website](#)
Deadline Open until vacancy filled

Employer New York University
Job Title Transportation & Smart Cities Research Associate
How to Apply [Website](#)
Deadline Open until vacancy filled

Have exciting content for the next issue?

Article pitches, women in transportation news, member spotlights, discussion topic ideas: [Email us](#) by 11/20/2020.

Communications committee
WTS-GNY