

WTS-LA Programs Deliver a Most Important Audience

Programs are the public face of WTS-LA. In nearly every case, a woman or man's first exposure to the chapter is through a program. So, the quality, substance, and timeliness of each program can determine whether or not a guest is moved to join the chapter. In short, programs are of critical importance. And in the past six months, the Programs Committee and its co-chairs—Kaoru McCullough, Jenelle Saunders, and Heather Anderson—outdid themselves by delivering compelling, informative, and invaluable events that have enticed people to join the chapter. Here is what they put together.



Mario Cordero (Port of Long Beach Executive Director), Photo by John Livzey, 2017

On July 26, WTS-LA was one of the first organizations to welcome newly appointed Port of Long Beach (POLB) executive director Mario Cordero. Held at the Westin Long Beach, the evening reception honored the international maritime leader, former federal maritime official, former Long Beach Harbor Commissioner, attorney, and Long Beach resident. With POLB doing more than \$180 billion worth of trade moves and generating more than 350,000 jobs in Southern California—not to mention significant revenues in various forms—attendance at the reception was standing room only. Both public and private sector leaders and professionals filled the Westin to hear Mario Cordero talk about everything from the economic strength of the Port, to the complex Gerald Desmond Bridge Replacement Project, to the first female slate of harbor commissioners in the Port's 105-year history. By virtually every measure, it was an extraordinary night.



WTS-LA Happy Hour, 2017

Next, the Programs Committee turned things more inward facing to help chapter membership to advance their careers. On August 30th, they hosted a networking happy hour at the Harbor House in downtown LA. Giving members an opportunity to meet with WTS-LA board members while expanding their professional network, the networking happy hour was an intimate opportunity for members to spend informal time rubbing elbows with WTS-LA leaders, which also means leaders of the transportation industry. And participants took full advantage of the opportunity.



Fran Inman (California Transportation Commission vice chair), Carrie Bowen (Caltrans District 7 director), John Walker (ADPW Programs Development Division assistant deputy director), Patricia Chen (Metro Countywide Planning & Development Department State Legislative Analysis and Discretionary Grants senior director), Photo by John Livzey, 2017

The October 5th program featured a panel of superlative speakers including California Transportation Commission vice chair Fran Inman, Caltrans District 7 director Carrie Bowen, LADPW Programs Development Division assistant deputy director John Walker, and Metro Countywide Planning & Development Department State Legislative Analysis and Discretionary Grants senior director Patricia Chen. A most impressive lineup of senior public-sector luminaries, they spoke eloquently about how each agency plans to approach the SB-1 state funding program. Held in the Millennium Biltmore Hotel's Emerald Ballroom, the packed audience received vital, first-hand information about the major funding philosophies of key Southern California transportation agencies.



Annual Scholarship and Awards Dinner, Photo by John Livzey, 2017

And last, but certainly not least, on November 9th, WTS-LA hosted its 31st Annual Scholarship and Awards Dinner. Welcomed by WTS-LA president Kathy Simons, the event was organized and implemented by WTS-LA Annual Scholarship and Awards Dinner chair Puja Thomas-Patel and the Annual Scholarship and Awards Dinner Committee. The evening event featured as emcees Metro senior executive officer for Project Management and Regional Rail Jeanet Owens and Metro executive officer for Program

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Management for Capital Projects Tim Lindholm. After Ms. Simons launched the evening's proceedings, Ms. Owens and Mr. Lindholm helped a host of presenters bestow more than \$71,000 in scholarships to deserving young students and mid-career WTS-LA members. Then, WTS-LA presented its annual awards as follows:

Rosa Parks Diversity Leadership Award - Los Angeles World Airports

Innovative Transportation Solutions Award - LAX Northside Plan Update

Member of The Year - Elizabeth Ramirez, Athens Services

Employer of The Year - Mott MacDonald

WTS Honorable Secretary Ray LaHood Award - Phillip Washington, Chief Executive Officer, LA County Metropolitan Transportation Authority

WTS-Los Angeles Woman of Distinction - Julie Allen, Bureau of Engineering, City of Los Angeles

All of the scholarship and award winners spoke movingly of what the honor meant to them. Each regaled the captive audience with personal anecdotes that included everything from how they were the first person in their family to go to college to how their upbringing shaped their views on diversity and equality. But the evening's purpose even transcended the chapter bestowing awards and scholarships. WTS-LA also hosted a silent auction and raffle that helped raise significant funds for next year's scholarships as well.

Programs are the public face of WTS-LA. Fortunately, the Programs Committee puts together dynamic programs like these that entice guests to join the chapter and expand WTS-LA's mission.