

Metro Deputy CEO Stephanie Wiggins: Minister of Culture



Stephanie Wiggins (Metro Deputy CEO), Photo © John Livzey, 2017

Her job description must be pages long. But though she's tasked with managing multiple key departments, Metro Deputy CEO Stephanie Wiggins adds another vital, global responsibility to her already considerable mandate.

"My promotion to deputy CEO occurred when CEO Phil Washington was brought on board. And as deputy CEO, I have a pretty large set of responsibilities; Metro is a large agency. I oversee employee and labor relations, safety and security, vendor/contract management, the congestion-reduction initiative, and the management audit services departments. But to me, those areas really speak to the culture of an agency. So, I feel like a culture protector. Phil is a very transformative leader. He's fostered a learning culture at Metro, a culture of innovation and workforce development. While that affects every Metro department, I feel that within the departments I oversee I want that positive culture to become institutionalized. So, you might call me Metro's self-appointed 'Minister of Culture.'"

A problem-solver by nature, Ms. Wiggins fully supports CEO Washington's initiatives and works tirelessly to ensure his vision is fulfilled. And she is recognized for her unique talents and abilities in that regard. A highly respected transportation professional, Ms. Wiggins earned that reputation through more than two decades of effective, dedicated service. But she also credits another organization for helping in her development.

"My first actual exposure to WTS was at a WTS-LA event. Eric Haley, then-CEO of the Riverside County Transportation Commission (RCTC), was the keynote speaker at a WTS-LA program. I worked for him at RCTC and he invited me to accompany him. And that was my first exposure to WTS. WTS-LA, and people like Deborah Berg and Alexandra Spencer, were very instrumental in helping us launch the WTS Inland Empire chapter. But I remember most being impressed with the VIPs in attendance at the event. The FTA Region 9 administrator was there. There were executives from Metro. And it struck me that we just didn't have a forum for this kind of gathering in the Inland Empire. I was also impressed with the diversity of those in attendance and that there were so many women in leadership roles. And that's why I've stayed in WTS all of these years.

"WTS is an incredibly supportive organization. And when they say that they support each other, it's not rhetoric. They mean it. When I left Riverside and joined Metro's congestion-reduction initiative, I got calls—out of the blue—from LA chapter members asking me if I needed anything, and offering help. I honestly didn't expect that. I knew the chapter had great programs, like professional development and networking. But that type of unsolicited outreach directed at me really made me know that this was an organization that I wanted to stay a part of. Those calls came when I needed them most. It demonstrated to me that the network was real, the support was real. But that is standard procedure for the chapter; it

Post Date: Mar. 1, 2017

wasn't something new or because of my position at Metro. But I also knew that from past experience. When we started the Inland Empire chapter, *the entire WTS-LA board mentored the Inland Empire board* to help us get started. That's just extraordinary. It wasn't competition; it was support. And that's what WTS-LA is all about and that's why I will always be a member."

But Stephanie Wiggins is more than just a WTS-LA member. In addition to having held several positions at WTS Inland Empire—including the founding chapter president—today she also serves as a WTS-LA director at large.