

LAWA's Cynthia Guidry: Building the Future and Sparking Enthusiasm



*Cynthia Guidry (Los Angeles World Airports Planning and Development Group Deputy Executive Director and WTS-LA Director)
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Los Angeles World Airports Planning and Development Group Deputy Executive Director and WTS-LA Director at Large, Cynthia Guidry manages some of the largest capital projects, yet takes time to inspire the next generation...

“My team is working on multiple programs at LAX (Los Angeles International Airport) and Van Nuys Airport. The biggest capital improvement project under my banner right now is the Midfield Satellite Concourse (MSC). We are in the middle of constructing a new \$1.6 billion, 12-gate facility for domestic and international travel, west of the Tom Bradley International Terminal, and working diligently on a mid-2020 opening. In fact, we’re at peak construction right now with over a thousand workers on site. We are also working on several airside projects, terminal improvements, a new Airport Police Facility and other developments.



“With nearly 400 people on the Planning & Development team, we are just part of the LAWA family involved in upgrading our infrastructure. We have an incredible staff keen on improving their work, their productivity, and their commitment to serve our guests and community. We are excited about the future, even more so with the Olympics coming in 2028. Eyes are on us as we deliver a \$14 billion capital plan that will transform LAX.”

Despite marshaling enough forces to comprise a small army, Ms. Guidry still finds time to do even more, to give back to the community in a very meaningful way, and the mechanism for that altruism is quite familiar.

“WTS’s Transportation YOU program is important to me. It’s given me great pleasure to talk to high school students about career opportunities. Through Transportation YOU, many professional women from WTS-LA have met with the young women participating in the program, and I believe that experience has proven invaluable for both groups. The ability to have face-to-face conversations about real experiences



and career paths with these young women has been extraordinary. Personally, I am able to share my story about what sparked my enthusiasm and excitement in transportation.”

“We make them aware that there are opportunities in transportation, including aviation. Many don’t know about them, but once we start talking about them, they’re all ears. In general, aviation as a career path just isn’t something that pops up in the mind of a

young high school student, so being able to share that reality at such a pivotal moment in their lives—when they’re looking at colleges and trying to determine what to study—is very important. Our program provides them with a comfortable setting to ask questions about their future.

Ms. Guidry credits Transportation YOU with providing exemplary guidance for young high school girls. But the young ladies are not the only people in the room that benefit. According to her, there are many poignant and fulfilling moments on both sides of the table. Some of the moments are even surprising.

“At the most recent program, I was fortunate enough to share the stage with Lydia Kennard (Founder/CEO of KDG Consulting and former Executive Director of LAWA). What she didn’t know was that she was one of *my* role models in aviation. Having the opportunity to hear Lydia talk about her journey, and then being able to tell her how much she inspired me to grow in my career was very moving, particularly in front of these young women. And the moment wasn’t lost on them as they realized the possibilities for their careers and the relationships they will build. That’s *exactly* what WTS-LA and Transportation YOU are all about.”

Ms. Guidry’s advice for those thinking about joining Transportation YOU or any other WTS-LA program? Find the time. In fact, she suggests that chapter members should, “just jump right in.”

“When you join a program like Transportation YOU, there is reward and satisfaction that money can’t buy. When you see and hear young women talk about how much you have inspired and educated them, how you’ve opened up their world—there’s no comparable feeling. This generation is exposed to a lot more



at a younger age than my generation was. So, when you’ve profoundly affected their lives in a positive way, when you’ve given them hope, that feeling of gratification is beyond measure. So, just go to one event. I promise you, once you go to one you’ll join the group and go to as many as you can.”

A WTS-LA member for more than 15 years, Ms. Guidry sees Transportation YOU as a perfect representation of the chapter and its mission, something she passionately believes in.



“WTS-LA is just as relevant and important today as the day I joined. One of the things I prize most about the chapter is that it is perennially forward-thinking. WTS-LA is about the future. It provides an active way to help the next generation of transportation professionals find their way and improve the industry and our community. We have the opportunity to inspire young people and better equip them to make informed choices about their careers and their lives. It enables me to envision a perfect scenario where one day one of the young women that I mentor will be taking over for me at LAWA. WTS-LA is the kind of organization that can make a vision like that a reality.”