

No Cursory Anniversary



Lisa Karwoski, PE, WTS-LA President (Mott MacDonald), Photo by John Livzey

Anniversaries mean different things to different people. To some, it's a celebration of the past. To others, it's a future-forward event, honoring the years passed by planning the future. Still others see anniversaries as somber occasions that need no note at all. Me, I'll take two out of three...

WTS-LA is 35 years old this year. And I see that as both a cause for celebration of the past and an opportunity to examine and plan for our collective future to ensure that the chapter continues to effectively advocate for women in transportation. So, it was with great joy that I learned that a 35th anniversary is typically celebrated with jade.

Prized by many cultures, including the Maori, Ancient Egyptians, and Meso-Americans, jade is revered particularly in Chinese culture. According to the Chinese philosopher Confucius, jade symbolizes or holds 11 virtues: benevolence, justice, propriety, truth, credibility, music, loyalty, heaven, earth, morality, and intelligence. If I had to describe a life well lived through WTS-LA, those are wonderful descriptors. And those are the qualities that I wish for all of us to use to frame our involvement in the chapter this year, our 35th successful year as an organization.

It is said that, "gold has value, but jade is invaluable." And that perfectly describes our chapter. Imagine what the transportation industry in Southern California would be without the dedicated efforts of our members over the years. From the senior women running transportation agencies and private corporations to the number of women who populate the rank and file at the entry level, we have made a very real difference. So, congratulations to you all. Through your participation, energy, smarts, moxie, and acumen, you make WTS-LA the force that it is. And now, with renewal in mind, I'd like to talk about the chapter and our immediate future together.

As we all know, spring is around the corner. A time of renewal and rejuvenation, spring is also an important time for our chapter. And this is a very unique time in transportation in Los Angeles County as well. Transportation is expanding throughout the Southland. We are leading the nation in terms of volume, innovation, planning, execution, and audacity. For all of those reasons, WTS-LA is that much more important. So, here is what I ask of you.

People—we need more people. Numbers matter. With greater numbers, with more members we can affect the industry to an even greater degree. We can help more women enter and advance in the transportation industry. We've made tremendous strides so far, but it's time to take things to the next level. And to do that, we need greater membership to further populate committees, events, efforts, and initiatives. Also, more members means more ideas, more energy, more connections, and more opportunity for all. So, see someone at work who you think might benefit from WTS-LA? Tell them more about us. Know someone at the gym who's in the industry? Bring them along to the next program. Meet

Post Date: Mar. 3, 2020

someone at the café who works for a railroad, an airline, or a transit agency? Get their email and send them a link to our website. Get a package delivered from FedEx or UPS? Tell her/him how WTS-LA can help improve their experience in the transportation industry. Reach out. Bring them in. Growth means opportunity for all.

And that leads perfectly to my next agenda item, International Women's Day. Officially slated for March 8, WTS-LA is getting a jump on the celebration (March 4) with a networking happy hour at the Hill Street Bar and Grill honoring International Women's Day and its theme—EachforEqual. An expression of collective individualism, EachforEqual simply means that while we are each individual and unique, when we come together, we can accomplish great things. Sounds a lot like the central ethos of WTS-LA. So, please join us for that celebration and learn more about what's being done to help further our mission.

Anniversaries mean different things to different people. For WTS-LA, this is a very special anniversary, a unique accomplishment, 35 years! Let's help use this celebration to grow the chapter and our effect on the transportation industry. Let's make this anniversary celebration—this jade celebration—most memorable and lasting. Let's celebrate together and bring the benefits of WTS-LA to an even greater part of the transportation industry.