



*Danielle Libring (Photos © John Livzey), 2020*

## **Danielle Libring: From Traffic to Rail at RailPros**

Danielle Libring believes in WTS so strongly, she's been actively involved with three chapters throughout her career.

"I've really been involved with WTS Orange County, WTS Inland Empire, and WTS-LA. It started when I won a scholarship (the 2009 \$5,000 Ava Doner Memorial Undergraduate Scholarship) from WTS-LA. From that, I got into the industry and I just stayed involved. I joined Inland Empire's and LA's early and mid-career mentoring programs, where I was counseled by Paula Beauchamp (SBCTA) and Dina Aryan-Zahlan (POLA), respectively. Later, I joined the Inland Empire's Recognitions Committee. Through this, I had the honor of mentoring a high school student as we went to Transportation YOU in Washington, DC.

"That was a really cool experience. It was great to connect with high school students, and one of the students ended up sticking with transportation and WTS. Through the trip, she discovered that she had a passion for aviation. We went to an air traffic control center and they got to do plane simulations. She loved it! I still see her at a lot of WTS events. And that's exactly what's so unique about WTS, what sets it apart from other organizations. Much like I connected with her, WTS connects me with a diverse multitude of transportation professionals throughout Southern California. They cover important regional topics for what the future of SoCal transportation looks like. And the training programs WTS provides are fantastic. I've done some of the WTS OC leadership development courses and learned valuable communication and management skills.

"Finally, WTS's mission is so near and dear to my heart. It really isn't rhetoric. It's an active philosophy where women and men help each other just because they belong to WTS. So, WTS has made a very real difference in my career. Think about it. First, WTS-LA helped me get through college. Then they gave me a chance to see and experience the empowerment of women and help me advance in my career. That's what makes WTS so successful."



Without question, WTS and WTS-LA are a perfect fit for Ms. Libring. A registered civil and traffic engineer and project manager with RailPros, she started out in traffic engineering for the City of Corona. Bringing traffic engineering expertise to her work, she rose quickly from a designer to Senior Project Manager (PM). Today, though her portfolio contains several significant projects, her signature project is the Van Nuys North Platform Project (Metrolink/Amtrak Station) for LA Metro's Regional Rail team. It's a massive project about to complete in March 2020. And her work as a PM on it was quite challenging.

"Each station is different, but Van Nuys presents unique challenges. We're turning an existing station from a side platform into a center platform with a grade separated pedestrian underpass. It's a lot of infrastructure to fit into a small amount of space on a complex multi-disciplinary project with a large number of stakeholders. And we've got to complete it while keeping the railroad in service and reducing customer impacts during construction. We can't take the tracks out of service and it's the major corridor for LOSSAN, Amtrak, Metrolink, freight, etc. So, figuring out the phasing and work windows in conceptual design were a real challenge. But in the end it was ultimately delivered on time and under budget and was a key turning point in her career.

Throughout her career, Ms. Libring has excelled at meeting difficult challenges. But that's no surprise to anyone who knows her. And figuring out complex logistical and engineering challenges started at a young age.

"I was definitely not a dolls girl growing up. I was much more interested in my brother's toys, like the race car tracks, Lincoln logs, legos, etc. That translated to a much more mathematical/science-type brain. Though I appreciate them, I've got no aptitude for the arts whatsoever! And my dad's a traffic engineer. He's worked for many local cities in Southern California. So, I decided I'd study civil engineering in college. And as I got into it, I thought, 'I'll try an internship in traffic engineering and see if I like it.' One decision after the next led me to rail, but I wouldn't have ended up here if it wasn't for him."

WTS-LA has served a very important purpose in Danielle Libring's career. Conversely, she's given quite a lot back to three different WTS chapters to help WTS help even more women in the transportation. She looks forward to continuing to serve the transportation industry and tackling more complex projects/programs in the future.