Catherine Mertens Myers
University of Portland
1983 Winner

Cathy studied at University of Portland, receiving a BS in Chemistry and a BS in General Engineering in 1983. When selecting these programs, the intent was to look for opportunities in alternative fuel development but at the time of graduation, these opportunities had diminished. Cathy took a position as a Resource Analyst with PNUCC, a utility trade organization that was responsible for assisting BPA and the Northwest Power Planning Council with electric utility resource planning. In this position, Cathy reviewed the 20-year energy forecast and was specifically responsible for consideration of renewable energy generating resources.

Cathy had developed an interest in facility design while reviewing conservation opportunities and pursued a position with Industrial Design Corporation, then a subsidiary of CH2M-Hill, in 1988. At this same time, she passed the licensing exam and was recognized as a Professional Mechanical Engineer. With IDC, Cathy began as a Mechanical Engineer supporting industrial facility design, primarily for facilities in the semiconductor industry. As IDC was a full-service design firm, she worked with chemical engineers on the design of exhaust treatment systems, chemical and gas delivery systems, but with a specific focus on the cleanroom mechanical systems.

Cathy became a lead Mechanical Engineer, responsible for all of the mechanical systems for a number of projects in the Portland area, then took on the role of Project Engineer, the lead technical position working closely with the Project Manager for a new facility at a new site with an international semiconductor company. As this campus developed, she became the Project Manager for IDC work and contributed to the technical transfer process for follow-on facilities that were located at other locations in the US as well as overseas. During this time period, Cathy was recognized as a Key Employee of CH2M-Hill, becoming an employee owner.

Cathy's next role was as the Strategic Account Manager for this key client, being responsible for projects, opportunities, technical work practices, and client relationships globally. Following an acquisition of Lockwood-Greene, a consulting firm with an extended industrial facility design group, she became a member of the 8-person leadership team for the combined group, CH2M-Hill's Industrial and Advanced Technology (IAT) sector. This sector focused on three markets—electronics, general manufacturing, and advanced facilities—and included more than 1200 employees in five global regions and an annual project revenue of more than $250M. In her role as VP, Operations, Cathy provided oversight for all IAT

projects to maintain customer satisfaction and perform work as requested; to determine how work was done—computer platforms, specifications, team formation; to oversee challenges such as technical issues and claims; and to be instrumental in employee development, considering career tracks and management opportunities.

Cathy's final role at CH2M-Hill was as Sr. VP for the Electronics Market, with the primary focus being Customer Relations—developing a strategy for growing the business, making decisions on opportunities, being the decision-maker for proposal/pricing determination, and working with Operations on project challenges. At this time, the Electronics Market was approximately half of the project revenue for IAT.

After 25 years at CH2M-Hill, Cathy became the Industry Liaison for the University of Portland Shiley School of Engineering. In this role, she was the architect and leader for the Shiley School of Engineering's portfolio of programs connecting students and faculty to industry and the community. This included assisting students with career development options, working with industry for internship and permanent placement positions, leading the effort to recruit industry-sponsorship for senior design projects; she also developed and presented a junior level Senior Project Preparation Course and a senior level Multi-Discipline Senior Project Course.

When a recent opportunity was presented to Cathy, she returned to private industry as a Sr. VP for SSOE Group, an architectural/engineering consulting company focused on industrial facilities. In this role, she leads the Advanced Technology Strategic Business Unit (SBU), serves as a Board member, and participates as a Principal owner and Management Team member.

As a member of the American Chemical Society, she served as Program Chair and Chair of the Portland Section (1984-86). Her professional society involvement shifted to engineering organizations—Society of Women Engineers (having been a founding member of the University of Portland section) and ASHRAE. Over the years Cathy participated as a Board member and officer of the SafeBuild Alliance (a construction safety organization) and presented papers at the Governor's Occupational Safety and Health Conference, Society of Women Engineers national and regional conferences, and the Construction Managers Association of America national and local conferences. She also participated in two research teams and presented at national conferences for the Construction Industry Institute. While at the University of Portland, she presented at the Lemelson Foundation Innovation Conference.

Cathy is also an active community volunteer, currently the Board Chair for Community Warehouse, a furniture bank, and a previous Board member for St. Mary's Academy in Portland. In addition, the family served a monthly dinner at Transition Projects for 10 years.

Cathy married Mark Myers in 1983 (they met at University of Portland) and they have three daughters—all with undergraduate degrees in Chemistry. Theresa is currently an OB/GYN resident in Honolulu, Janelle is a food scientist pursuing an advanced degree in the FIPDes (Food Innovation and Product Design) international program in Dublin and Paris, and Karen is an environmental scientist with a focus on invasive plants and habitat restoration, working in the Chicago area. Obviously, Cathy and Mark also have the opportunity to enjoy travel!