

ANYTHING IS POSSIBLE

ANTICIPATE. ADAPT. EVOLVE.



TECH IT OUT

Article by Rebecca Rusk

“I DON’T WANT TO BE THAT OLD LADY...”

...was the battle cry from Dr. Janine Davidson, president of Metropolitan State University of Denver. During her keynote at the recent WICT Rocky Mountain Chapter Tech It Out (TIO) event, Dr. Davidson passionately pushed back on treating young women with anything less than respect.

Some lady trailblazers may get annoyed at the younger generation of women who complain about how bad they have it, the issues they encounter and the hurdles still to face.

Some OG (Old Guard) express, “Wow! How can they possibly stress over that when we had it so much worse!” Some women of a certain age, especially in the technology field that TIO targets, have broken down barriers for younger, talented tech ladies. Yet despite their efforts, some OG say some younger leaders appear unappreciative or entitled.

But Dr. Davidson was having none of that. “I don’t want to be that old lady,” she said. This generation has a right to fight its battles and choose its concerns. Don’t diminish the next generation because you perceive their fight is less important than yours.

Dr. Davidson’s perspective was reinforced by a conversation I heard on NPR with Gloria Steinem. Steinem is a feminist, journalist and a social activist recognized as one of the leaders of the Women’s Movement starting in the 1960s. She commented that this generation’s struggles are as real as ours. They may be different, but at least women are still fighting.

I found this to be amazing. Two strong women saying nearly the same thing to two very different audiences in the same week. Yes, we have come a long way, baby!

We started the Rocky Mountain WICT Tech It Out event a dozen years ago to showcase women in tech, and to provide role models, mentors and learning opportunities. We encouraged women, young and old, to embrace tech careers. As a TIO co-founder, it gives me huge pleasure

that the event has blossomed to over 500 attendees with many men in the audience. I'm proud of the new generation of leaders and of the old guard who still support them. Together we fight the good fight for women not only to work in technology, but to become leaders in tech and claim their seat in the C-suite.



Above, l-r: Dr. Mona Kessel, Program Scientist, Heliophysics Division, NASA; Rebecca Rusk; Leslie Ellis, technology writer, speaker and editor.

As I was leaving TIO and we'd said our many thanks and congratulations, one of the current chapter leaders said to me, "You know, we are standing on your shoulders." Now that's an outcome I fully endorse. Keep building those leaders ladies, because soon there will be more women standing on yours!

Well done, WICT Rocky Mountain!

Rebecca Rusk is one of the co-founders of the WICT Rocky Mountain Chapter's Tech It Out program, and a graduate of Betsy Magness Leadership Institute Class 13. As a leader in user experience, her passion is delighting users and delivering on business goals with data to prove it.