



President's Message

From the Desk of Amy Archer,

**WTS-Rhode Island
Chapter President**

We have successfully made it through 2020 but are still facing many uncertainties moving into this year. Though there was some hesitation at first, not knowing how long the pandemic may last, we have fully embraced the virtual platforms and are forging ahead in that manner until our membership is comfortable reconvening in person. Looking forward, considering the circumstances and in general, this pause has provided the opportunity to refocus on what we hold paramount. We would like to ensure the pillars of WTS are being met, in a way that best serves our Chapter.



To attract, sustain, connect and advance our membership, we have several goals and initiatives:

- *Provide diversity in the types and topics of our programming to reach all aspects and sectors of the transportation industry.*
- *Develop a uniform, branded appearance for communications that embraces the changes made at the International level.*
- *Establish an advisory committee to support our vision forward without losing perspective of what has been.*
- *Foster mentoring at all levels to share the knowledge and experiences of those who have them, with those who are striving to do so.*

Most importantly, we want to assure you that even in this more distanced environment, we are here, and we are here for each other.

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Diversity & Inclusion Forum Nets Big Turnout for Joint ACEC-RI and WTS-RI Event

By Joe Wanat

On February 24, 2021 a joint ACEC-RI and WTS-RI virtual roundtable event was held to discuss diversity and inclusion (D&I) in our industry and best practices for integrating D&I in the culture of our industry. Diversity is about WHO WE ARE. OUR DIFFERENCES. It's more than just gender and race. Inclusion is about our environment. Our culture. Our space. Our work. For example, ADA advanced inclusion in our design practice. The "gold standard" is an inclusive environment with a diverse workforce. The engineering industry has made some progress on this front, but there is a lot of work to be done. Forums such as this are intended to serve as a catalyst to think about D&I and how you can move the needle at your firms.

The forum included three panelists - Mike Carragher (VHB), Eric Offenberg (WSP), and Jim Vincent (RIPTA). The panelists discussed two topics: (1) Why is diversity and inclusion important within the engineering and planning professions; and (2) Actions, programs or initiatives (current or planned) that advance diversity and inclusion.

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2021 Executive Board Profiles

President Amy Archer



I am excited to begin my first year as chapter president. I have participated in and chaired various committees within WTS-RI for nine years now. I'm thankful for that time under the leadership of several other strong-willed women. It has provided me the opportunity to see the many facets of what WTS has to offer and to develop my vision for continuing to grow and advance our chapter. We have an outstanding board of energetic and committed individuals that encourage me to believe, despite the ongoing pandemic, that we will have a very successful year.

Vice President Kristin Caouette



I joined WTS-Rhode Island in 2015 after an enthusiastic recommendation from a co-worker and encouragement from my office leadership. I was in the right place at the right time and joined the Board as Secretary. The Board was incredibly welcoming and supportive. In 2020 I moved into the role of Director of Fundraising. Working on the Board I have expanded my network, learned new skills, and taken on leadership responsibilities I wouldn't have had otherwise. It's a great experience I would recommend to anyone!

Secretary Anita Marshall



I've been involved with WTS since 2005 when a coworker encouraged me to attend meetings and events. I joined WTS as the Program Director in 2006 when we started a new chapter in RI. Over the years I have held various positions including Programs Director, Secretary, Treasurer, and Membership Director. It has been very rewarding to network with professionals from various backgrounds, and to help plan events for WTS. We have a well organized chapter with dedicated volunteers, and interesting topics with events throughout the year.

Treasurer Ashley Cunha



I am a civil engineer at VHB. I have been a member of WTS since 2015. I became involved as a result of the advice of a co-worker who had experienced all that WTS has to offer. WTS has been a great networking tool allowing me to make many connections with various men and women in the transportation industry. It has also taught me different skills including leadership and communication which have helped me in my career.

Immediate Past President Julie Oakley



I'm looking forward to supporting the new leadership at WTS of WTS-Rhode Island as last year brought us fantastic programs, new sponsors, and the chance to reconnect with some old friends. As a Assistant Director of Administrative Services within the Office of Transit at the Rhode Island Department of Transportation, I'm part of the senior leadership for that Office looking to create a robust transit network in the State of Rhode Island, WTS is just one of the ways I get to explore what transit is and can be in through networking with users, consultants, and experts in the transportation field.

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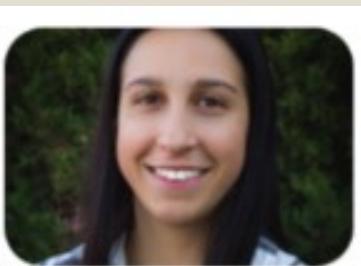
Board Profiles

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Communications Chair Pamela Cotter



Membership Chair Nicole Richard



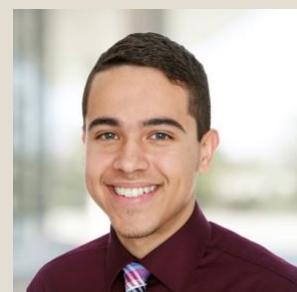
Fundraising Chair Katie Scancarello



Programs Chair Antonia Thomas



Student Outreach Sam Hawkins



I joined WTS-Rhode Island shortly after coming to RIDOT in 2016. Prior to joining the transportation sector, I had a 25-year career in journalism. I'm looking for committee members to help grow the Communications team and look forward to expanding our efforts this year to help inform everyone about all the great things we do. With the ongoing pandemic, communications is more important than ever. We're reaching out via emails, this newsletter, social media and more. Feel free to reach out to me anytime with suggestions.

I previously served two consecutive terms as Student Outreach Director, leading the efforts to establish a WTS Student Chapter at URI. My active participation in WTS and dedication to the student chapter was recognized by WTS-RI in 2018 when I was presented with the Member of the Year Award. Currently, I serve as the Director of Membership and plan to continue my involvement with this organization for years to come.

WTS-RI is an organization where your involvement makes a significant impact and it is very easy to get involved. I have been an active member of the student outreach and programs committees since 2015, when I started showing up at the board meetings and was immediately enveloped in the organization leadership. After serving as a committee member and co-chair, I am glad to officially join the board as the Fundraising Chair and help our chapter continue to thrive.

I became involved with WTS-Rhode Island not too long after beginning my career at McMahon Associates. Angela Saunders who is a past president and still an active member showed me all that WTS has to offer. As a younger staff engineer WTS has been a great networking tool that has allowed me to meet many new men and women within the transportation profession. I decided to become the director of the programs committee to expand my leadership skills and become a more active member of this important

I am a traffic engineer at McMahon Associates, and I'm currently serving as the WTS-Rhode Island Student Outreach Committee director. I joined WTS-Rhode Island shortly after attending the 2018 Scholarship and Awards Dinner, which was my first WTS event. The team gave me a very warm welcome later that year, and I'm now happy to say that I've taken an active role on the board. WTS does so much to advance women (and men!) in the transportation industry, and being a part of that has been very exciting and rewarding.

2021: WTS-RI Celebrates 15 Years as a Chapter!

Looking Back on the 2006 Founding of WTS-Rhode Island Chapter



By Lisa Sherman

When my career first began in the transportation industry, I joined WTS as part of the WTS-Boston Chapter, which had been established for quite a while, led by incredible women in the industry. WTS has since been a part of my career growth and success, but also a part of my personal growth. Participating with the chapter in Boston helped me to meet many mentors, people I thought of as "big sisters" and even "second moms", as well as colleagues in the industry making their way just as I was.

Fast forward 10 or so years from my introduction to WTS in Boston - due to relocation to the Providence area for work - my time with WTS-Rhode Island began. WTS-Rhode Island gave me the opportunities to participate in leadership roles which helped me both personally and professionally; from membership chair to senior leadership roles, WTS-Rhode Island has given me years of fond memories.

WTS-Rhode Island has been led by untiring women, with the desire to carry on the tenets of our larger organization to advance women and advance transportation but also embrace and recognize the uniqueness of Rhode Island. From classy luncheon events at the Rhode Island Convention Center Rotunda Room and the historic Biltmore hotel to professional development activities to outdoor activities such as golfing events, bicycle rides and even ocean journeys, WTS-Rhode Island offers something for everyone in Transportation in the "Ocean State". Now, as we prepare to embark on recognition of our 15-year anniversary, we have the opportunity to reunite (hopefully in person) to celebrate the past 15 years of our fledgling chapter and see how truly far we really have come. Today, I can re-connect with people I met within the Boston chapter years ago and the Rhode Island chapter not as long ago and it is as if no time has passed; WTS has this uncanny way of connecting people forever! Certainly, we are all a little older and perhaps a bit wiser, but WTS is a connection I will always treasure. Perhaps it is the tenets of the organization – advancing women, advancing transportation... perhaps it also advances us all in general as people.

February 16, 2006
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Women's Transportation Seminar (WTS) forms a new chapter in Rhode Island

Providence, Rhode Island --- The RI Affiliate of the Boston Chapter of WTS announces that it is forming a separate Rhode Island chapter in February. The mission of WTS is to advance the careers of women in transportation. RI chapter roots began four years ago and have expanded to include more than twenty women from RIDOT, RIPTA, RI Statewide Planning Program, RI Airport Corporation and consulting firms. In 2002 Pamela Sherrill, AICP, a principal planner at Pare Engineering Corp. in Lincoln and Mona Manachi, RIDOT Assistant Chief, Highway Bridge Construction Operations formed the group to provide outreach to students with transportation careers, to conduct construction tours, and to network with other transportation professionals to meet the unique challenges of transportation issues here in Rhode Island. An inaugural reception will be held March 28th at the Federal Reserve in Providence. More information will be on the website at www.wtsinternational.org in the Rhode Island Chapter's news and events section.

"I am pleased to welcome and encourage support of a WTS chapter in Rhode Island. The formation of this organization shows how important transportation is not only to residents and visitors, but to business professionals as well," said James R. Capaldi, PE, Director of the Rhode Island Department of Transportation (RIDOT). "WTS-RI will promote collaboration amongst professionals from all facets of transportation including State agencies, consultants, and contractors."

"Through our extensive network, WTS provides its members tremendous access to people, information, and opportunities," reports Lucy Garlauskas, Federal Highway Division Administrator in Rhode Island and a former WTS National President and Advisory Board member. "WTS supports the transportation industry by advancing women in transportation through national and local scholarships, mentoring, leadership training and creating a network that brings together a range of transportation professionals from many disciplines through programs that cut across a wide range of current transportation issues. A Rhode Island chapter of WTS benefits the transportation industry and women as well."

Founded in 1977, the Women's Transportation Seminar was created through the efforts of 40 women involved in transportation in the Washington, DC, area who recognized that a mechanism was needed to enhance professional and personal advancement and to develop industry and government recognition of the increasing involvement of women in the field of transportation. After nearly 25 years of growth and development, WTS is now an international organization of more than 4,000 transportation professionals - both women and men. More than 38 chapters have developed over the years, serving the local needs of WTS members in the U.S., Canada and Great Britain.

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Above, memories from 2007 – I-195 (Iway) Construction Tour: From left: Anita Marshall (RIDOT), Mona Manachi (then of RIDOT), Patty Steere (then of Maguire and designer of the Iway bridge), and Lisa Andrews (RIDOT). Mona, who was one the chapter founders with Pam Sherrill in 2006 (mentioned **at left** as signatory of the first Chapter press release) has since retired and is living in Tucson AZ.

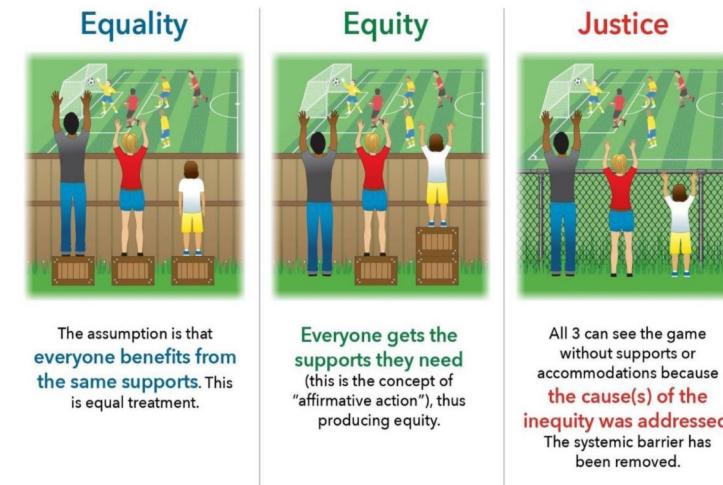
D&I Forum

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Highlights included:

- Every professional has a code of ethics and a duty to fulfill it, "being responsible for the building environment". D&I is one element. We benefit from our engagement with people with broad and diverse experiences, backgrounds, and perspectives.

Equality vs. Equity vs Justice



- From a business aspect, businesses with diverse cultures perform better. This has been documented.
- There may be initial hesitancy and fear to take steps in this direction and they can be incremental, small steps.
- Initiatives discussed included:
 - Conducting a compensation analysis
 - Advancing women and minorities in leadership roles
 - Developing a corporate team that designs company D&I programs and processes
 - Partnering with a D&I expert trainer and facilitator when needed
 - Providing bias awareness workshops
 - Establishing an Employee Resource Group as a safe place for employees to offer thoughts and ideas
 - Holding frequent community conversations and panel discussions to discuss D&I
 - Implementing mentoring programs that pair staff professionals with senior executives
 - Creating a D&I toolbox with a link to all employees containing D&I strategies, guidelines, work sheets, videos, and Supplier diversity guidelines for connecting and building business relationships
 - Establishing a communication portal, similar to social media, enabling employees to connect and talk
 - Creating an online learning resource with articles, videos, and brain performance challenges

Additional resources on Diversity & Inclusion can be found on the ACEC-RI website: <https://www.acec.org/rhode-island/diversity-equity-and-inclusion-resources/>

WTS-RHODE ISLAND UPDATES & EVENTS

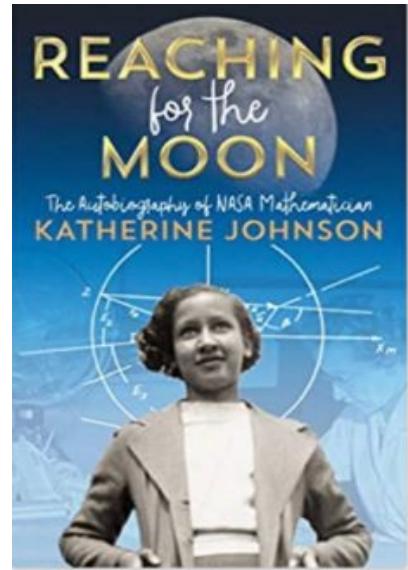
Trivia Night Was a Big Success

Thank you to everyone who turned out for the WTS-Rhode Island Virtual Trivia Night on March 18.

Three teams of six members each competed for fame and fortune (well, OK, bragging rights) for a fun night of fellowship and collaboration.

The Zoom event worked well, included breakout rooms for the teams to debate answers and “bets” on how many points would be at stake.

Join us next time!



Our next book club selection is “Reaching for the Moon” by Katherine Johnson, with discussion slated via Zoom on Friday, April 23 at noon.

Join the WTS-Rhode Island Book Club any time by emailing the chapter:

wtsrhodeisland@gmail.com

Membership Discount Ending

Time is running out on the March Membership Discount Offer!

Membership benefits include:

- Discount rates for all WTS-Rhode Island events.
- Extensive networking opportunities with transportation professionals here in Rhode Island.
- *TransPortal*: You will be instantly linked to a 6,000 member network of women and men at all levels of transportation policy, planning, design, and operation, including many WTS members in key state and federal transportation positions.
- *Knowledge Lab*: A members only portal to documents, videos, transcripts, and other resources that offer career and transportation industry content.

Any WTS member who joins as a new member or renews their existing membership (regardless of when it expires) during the month of March will receive a 15% discount!

Please contact Membership Committee Chair, Nicole Richard, at Nicole.Richard@SteereEngineering.com or (401) 773-7880 ext. 21 for more information on how to take advantage of this amazing offer.

