Good Evening—tonight we celebrate the Silicon Valley Chapter of NAWIC on their 60th Anniversary Chartering! Wow, what an amazing accomplishment! This chapter started back in 1965, with June Simmons as their chartering President, and today we honor her legacy with our June Simmons Scholarship. Much of our chapter contributions goes towards funding our scholarship programs and community outreach…. We can't do this alone and we thank each of you for supporting our chapter and our goals towards enhancing the success of women in construction.

Now saying all that, being a women in construction has not come easy for us… we have had to break barriers and pave the way for us to lead in this male populated industry. Today only about 11% of women make up the industry, but we are adding to that number everyday.

Now…. Let's take a look at where we have come from and where we are heading… how we are making a difference and changing the industry for women!

General Booth of the Salvation Army once asked a man who was extremely successful in dealing with mule teams how he managed such stubborn creatures. The man explained "When they stop and won't go on, I just pick up a handful of soil and stuff it in their mouths." Of course, they spit it out, but as a rule they get going." Why do you think this works? asked General Booth. Well, I don't know but I expect it gets their attention and changes their way of thinking.

I supposed in many ways, this has been the technique that many woman have had to use in order to make progress! Progress has not been easy, but progress we have had. Congress designated March as Women's History Month in 1987. … and it continues to grow. March also celebrates WIC Week, in which we just celebrated our 27th year! In Today's time we celebrate-

Globally-

- International Womens Day
- Women's History Month

- International day of the child- which focuses on empowerment for girls and their rights

US Celebrations-

- National Girls in Sports
- Womens' Equality Day
- Mothers Day
- Equal Pay Day
- Black Women/Latina Women Equal pay day

Specific Celebrations-

- Women in Construction Week
- Women's Entrpreneurship Day
- Girls in ICT Day ( information and communications)
- Women in Engineering Day

**And the list continues to grow!!!!**

Women have been ignored and devalued over the centuries, yet they worked right alongside the men in many aspects and even surpassed the efforts made by men. We can learn a lot from studying the history of women. The truth would be a refreshing change! For example, did you know that in 1776, Sybil Ludington, aged 16, rode from town to town warning, "The British are coming, the British are coming." She covered double the distance that Paul Revere covered but have you ever heard of her? Remember Sacajawea, a 19-year old Native American girl that guided Lewis and Clark to the Pacific Coast and she did it with her son right there on her back!

In the Middle Ages women participated in almost every area of the economy -- home and the place of work were one and the same. Women supervised huge establishments that included a wide variety of domestic industries from baking, brewing, and tanning to making cloth, candles, and soap. When their husbands were away, they also ran the family estates.

The system fell apart in the 17th century as business became too big to be conducted in the back of the house. In the new system of business, participation meant long distance travel and investment of capital. Let's start

with the fact that English law didn't even ALLOW married women to have any personal wealth, let alone own a business! Wives became less involved in businesses and that led increasingly to economically useless lives. Women were confined to the home and really did have fewer things that were highly valued by their culture. Industrialization had truly sharpened the class distinctions as men went out and brought in the cash. Women worked at home and society measured value in cash. How much do you have? Women were not paid for work in the, therefore they were devalued.

The oldest profession on earth – THE PROSTITUTE -- may have looked something like this in the 1800s here we have NAWIC's outstanding **Samantha Hunt**. In spite of her stunning beauty and voluptuous body, she was outcast and disregarded by all of society including the very men who used her. Not unlike today, she subjected herself to disease, degradation, and humiliation. For the most part, this was not a profession that a woman would have chosen if she'd had a choice. Rather this was a way to survive. She was economically disadvantaged -- unmarried and lacking any other skills to support herself. During the Civil War, many women became camp followers. They cooked and washed for their men. Other followed inn less wifely capacities -- large number of prostitutes followed the army and they were named for its General -- Joe Hookers girls -- hence the name Hookers.

Thank you Sam—

The Civil War was also a major watershed. In the history of American women, for the very first time, females entered the civil service doing office work, nursing and even worked in the retail trades. Here we have our very own **Zuri Hernandez, our Nurse**. During the Civil War nursing was turned into a profession for women, but there was a great concern about moral temptations, lewd and lascivious conduct. So, nurses had to be over 30 years of age and thick-waisted. Obviously, our **Zuri** wouldn't have had a prayer of getting a job in this profession! Nurses during the Civil War were victims of incredible discrimination and most were not even paid for their work. One good after effect was that after the Civil War more colleges opened to women

because so many men had been killed, the colleges needed tuition money and taxpayer support to survive.

This period of history did see some growth in industry and education opportunities for women. American industry required use of lower-class women to support its growth. Women just added this work to their chores at home. They were paid up the 75% less than their male counterparts and were convinced that they needed to feel guilty while they did it. It was not until many years later that labor unions helped to improve women's pay and working conditions.

Thank you Zuri—

If you'd been hanging out, you might have overheard the following conversation. See if you can figure out what type of criminal they were speaking to...

> No, you cannot marry or keep company with men.
> We will not tolerate you hanging around ice cream stores.
> You cannot smoke.
> You will wear at least 2 petticoats at all times. And your skirts must be no shorter than two inches above the ankle.
> Further, you will scrub the floors at least once a week, sweep it daily, and start a fire by 7:00 AM.

Here comes the criminal now by golly its **Kaitlyn Shelton** and her famous bell. Her crime? She is a **school teacher.** Her appearance and her conduct must be above reproach. No human characteristics would be displayed. Her clothing would be a reflection of her conduct. By 1888 63% of all teachers were women.

In 1848, the first women's rights convention was held in America. The focus was not on voting, rather it was about allowing women to follow men out of the home and into the workplace. Over 175 years ago, that's when it was. Can you imagine the first public high school to allow women was not available until the year **1824.** And the first college to admit women was in the year **1837!**

Women were not allowed to study higher math because their brains were considered to be physically smaller, unequal to the strain thus having less capacity for learning.

In spite of these shortcomings (tongue in cheek), women were continued to make small inroads into the business world. By 1918, 25% of the workforce was women but only 11% were married. Women were now working as stenographers, bookkeepers, librarians, nurses, and telephone operators if they were educated. Sadly, the majority of workers were immigrants or blacks. They worked due to economic necessity rather than an attitude about propriety, prosperity or property. Not a single woman scientist held a job in industry prior to World War One.

Thank you Kaitlyn

In 1920, the 19th amendment gave women the vote but this had very little effect on bringing more women into the business world. It did give them a bit more confidence and gave women a stronger voice. The Charleston and prohibition had a tremendous impact on the 1920s. But the real impact was our very own, Twinkle Toes **Laura Grabar**! After World War 1, many women had a taste of freedom, and independence and did not want to go back to the old way of living. Movies, Jazz and magazines glamorized a more daring and carefree lifestyle.

This saw a resurgence of attitudes emphasizing women's maternal and marital roles the symbol of the 20s was the flapper not the emancipated career woman.

Women in the 1920's were at the forefront of major social and economic changes. It was a transformative decade where traditional roles began to shift... often referred to as the roaring 20's. With the passing of the roaring 20s and the demise of prohibition, it was the beginning of womenhood in the workforce. One of the most amazing traits that women possess is their ability to adapt. Much like the chameleon, our model will throw away her nightlife persona and become a lady.

Thank you Laura.

With the Great Depression in full swing, the 1930s saw great hostility toward female employment, particularly great antagonism toward working wives. From 1932 to 1937, the federal government prohibited more than one member of a family from working in the civil service. States actually passed legislation restricting the employment of married women. Opportunities for professional women declined even further. Teaching jobs almost disappeared. An interesting side note: in 1930 women were virtually 0% of engineers in the United States and by 1989 we were only 7.5%.

In the 40s World War 2 changed everything! Labor was in short supply, therefore attitudes changed temporarily. The formation of the WAVES (Women Accepted for Voluntary Emergency service) brought us our "Rum and Coca-Cola drinking". In World War II, 3 million women took jobs outside the home for the very first time and for the very first time they were able to find good paying jobs as well. Names and faces looking at us from billboards caught our imagination and sent us rushing out for a job! There was "June who makes the planes" and "Wanda the welder" and of course here is **Kayla** as our very own "Rosie the Riveter" She was there very fashionable with peroxide curls caught in a snood for safety. Now if you don't know what a snoot is you really are young.

Unfortunately, at the end of the war, the women were sent back to their homes and their low paying jobs. They were expected to give up their jobs to the veterans, in spite of studies that showed 80% of these women wanted to keep their jobs after the war. There was a general feeling that these women worked because the men were not available. That they worked to supplement the man's income and to pay for a child's college education or a home. And it was said that women were looking for jobs not careers – often wrong.

Thank you Kayla

During the 1950s, a truly remarkable invention came into our homes and changed us forever. It was the television! Here she is Wonder Woman **Brenda Trejo.** The June Cleaver and Harriet Nelson look alike was really working it. At

work, of course, they politely and gently served their bosses coffee when asked. But we women all learned to get up out of bed already dressed in our daytime finest, pearls and all, every hair in place, just dying to cook breakfast, get the husband and children off for the day, clean the kitchen, polish the furniture, vacuum, and just before we slipped off to PTA meeting we'd wallpaper the laundry room just for the hell of it I did all this didn't you???

Women were, however making progress and entering into the business world in ever increasing numbers. In 1953, 16 of these working women, Girl Fridays organized Women in Construction in Fort Worth Texas. These WICs wanted to create a support organization for women employed in the construction industry. In 1955, WIC gained its national charter and became the National Association of Women in Construction, NAWIC as we know it. In its 70 years of service, NAWIC has advanced the cause of all women in construction whose careers ranged from the skilled trades to architects and business owners.

Thank you Brenda

The 1964 Civil Rights Act only included the word “sex” because it was added as a joke by a Virginia representative who wanted to defeat the entire bill by developing controversy and ridicule. Oops! He screwed up! In the 60's the amazing birth control pill brought unprecedented freedom to women. Take a look at Miss **Pat McDonald** no more did we have to wear suits and dresses. We could get comfortable in a pair of pants. The comfort zone has arrived polyester pants are in! It is downright amazing what havoc that little birth control pill brought to the male population. Their egos were shot! More and more women were free to make choices concerning their body and their time.

The women's movement came into its own. The formation of NOW and other women's organizations brought the plight of the oppressed women to light. She has burned her Bra to show her rebellion side... Feminists gathered outside of pageants and other public areas to throw things in the “ Freedom Trash Cans”, things they felt represented the objectification and oppression of women: Bras, High Heels, Girdles, playboy magazines, etc.! The famous bra burnings told the world “We aren't gonna stop until we get what we want!”

Women are now entering the work working world and colleges like never before. By 1970 the percentage of women in the work world has risen to 38%. Even though we now see more and more professional women, we also see discrimination in other fields. Many retail stores would not issue independent credit cards to married women and divorced or single women often found it difficult to obtain credit at all or to purchase a house. Laws concerned with welfare, crime, prostitution and abortion displayed a bias against women.

Thank you Pat....

The late 70s , early 80's found 44% of working women as secretaries, sales clerks, bookkeepers, domestics, elementary school teachers, waitresses, typists, cashiers, seamstresses and nurses. But we are now beginning to see women lawyers, doctors, engineers, politicians, trades women and scientists like never before. Here we have our own Professional Engineer **Kara Hermann**. The word "career" is often used to designate a job that involves a higher level of commitment than one taken primarily to increase the family income. Women managers encountered setbacks early in their careers, when they needed more time at home for children. In a still growing trend, the 80s saw the "Mommy track," These women were identified as career and family workers. Progressive companies developed executive programs with flexible work days which allowed these women to foster their talents while nurturing young families.

The 90's found even more women in roles like business owners, and partners or even by themselves. They are starting their own ventures as a better way to integrate the many equally important priorities in their lives – work, family and themselves.

Thank you Kara.

In 1948 men were 86% of the workforce – leaving a paltry number of jobs for women. But in 2024, 57% of the American workforce was made up of women.

Today we have events focusing on construction for female like Camp NAWIC, Future Construction Leaders, Block Kids, Rosie's Girls, Pizza Pop and Power Tools and many, many other programs. We are reaching out to the youth so that they grow up confident that they CAN do it!

Here is today's woman – a construction company owner, a project manager, estimator, cost analyst – and they can totally hold their own. Here we see **KIRA** who is as comfortable on the job site as any man. A female safety director that checks jobsites daily and works hand in hand with the field, in a mostly male environment, and thriving in it! She has been raised in the world of technology as well, and handles her company IT and website- She is young, and eager to learn and grow and be our next generation moving us forward!

Ladies, We can and we do – Do it all!!

In a large part because of the persistent of the American woman, barriers have been removed for everyone, and the American workplace continues to be more diverse to reflect the true variety of our society. Today, right now, 57% of the American workforce is women. There are interestingly higher numbers of male nurses, male secretaries, and male stewardesses. Today, gays and lesbians can take their rightful place in our society. Today, the physically disabled are no longer shunned and hidden from view. Today, in many parts of this country the diversity is being celebrated not opposed.

**ALL the Models now come in and line up in the front.**

Rejoice in your accomplishment, you exceptional women! But make no mistake, we still have a lot of work to do and a long way to go. Stop for a moment and take pride in where you've come from, where you are, and where you are going. We have fought long and hard, and we will continue to be tenacious, determined and persistent. Learn from our history. Don't ever be jealous of each other… work with each other, support each other… Lift each other up…. we need each other for the greater good of all women.

**Happy 60th Anniversary Silicon Valley Chapter 99!!**

**You look damn good from here.**