

# BUILDINGWOMEN

Strategies and solutions for women in the building industry

2021



## ADDING SEATS TO THE TABLE

2021 PWB Chair Karen J. Schroeder  
is committed to increasing diversity

*A publication of NAHB*

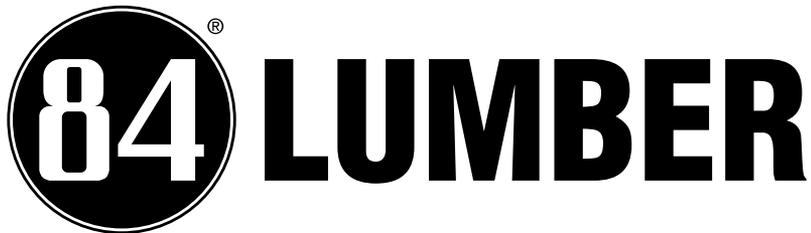
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Empowered to  
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*By Pat Curry*

As a Jewish child growing up in a predominantly Christian neighborhood in the 1960s, Karen J. Schroeder didn't really understand that she was different until her family's synagogue was painted with swastikas and burned down. The NAHB PWB 2021 Chair says she is committed to making everyone feel welcome.

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Join our discussion on Facebook and LinkedIn.com  
Search for the group "Official NAHB Professional Women in Building Network"

# Perspectives

## BUILDING WOMEN

Chartered in 1955, the NAHB Professional Women in Building Council (PWB) consists of a network of local and state councils and national members. NAHB PWB is dedicated to promoting, enhancing, and supporting home building and women within the industry.

## PWB Continues to Thrive and to Serve

When I was installed as the 2020 NAHB PWB Chair, it was a major highlight and accomplishment in my career and in my life. We all left the International Builders' Show full of hope excitement, and promise for a terrific year!

As our PWB council chairs and members across the country got busy doing the work of NAHB, our local and state home builder associations, and our PWB councils, we were excited about getting the subcommittees up and running. In mid-March, the coronavirus (COVID-19) became the focus of our nation and the world. As the days went on, we learned to shift how we do business and to conduct our lives in a new way.

On a personal note, a shift in business plans gave me the opportunity to semi-retire in 2020. One of the greatest benefits of this change in my career was that I could focus the majority of what would have been work time on my role as the PWB council chair.

During 2020, I enjoyed meeting hundreds of PWB members from across the country via Zoom calls, where we conducted council business and had time to socialize. We celebrated the 100th anniversary of women's right to vote, baby showers, weddings, happy hours, and so much more. Our members stayed connected during the crisis, and I might say, we prospered. Technology does have a way of bringing efficiency and saving time.

Although the pandemic affected us all, I am proud to say that PWB members continued to volunteer on a local, regional and national level. Our council has worked hard to spread the word that we welcome all to the PWB table. We are inclusive and diverse.

Having a strong group of volunteers served us well in 2020. Members stepped up to help subcommittees and local councils. We continued to raise money for scholarships for students pursuing careers in construction. We donated our time to our local communities and helped those in need. We also continued planning on a national and local level for 2021 and beyond.

During 2020, we engaged with our members through Facebook pages and other social media channels. We grew to more than 60 councils and overall interest in forming local councils across the country continues to grow. I would even say that a good number of us got to know our fellow members very well during an uncertain and unsettling time.

In 2021, the PWB council and its members continue to work hard for NAHB as mentors and leaders across the federation. Our members take pride in stepping up and making a difference everyday for the housing industry. In fact, 100 percent of the 2020 NAHB PWB Board of Trustees contributed to BUILD-PAC, to help elect pro-housing candidates to elected office.

Thank you for the privilege of being your NAHB PWB 2020 Council Chair. I have enjoyed every minute of this year. Thank you to our amazing NAHB PWB staff members for their hard work and kindness. The members of the NAHB PWB 2020 Board of Trustees are talented, smart teammates and friends. Thanks to the council's subcommittee leadership and all volunteers who worked hard during my term. Thank you to the NAHB senior leadership for always supporting the NAHB

PWB Council! Your support means the world to our members.

Professional Women in Building, we are a "familyhood" and we are a positive force in all that we do! **BW**



*Betsy*

Betsy Sheppard

2020 Chair, NAHB Professional Women in Building Council

### 2021 NAHB Professional Women in Building Council Leadership

#### Chair

Karen J. Schroeder, Mayberry Homes

#### Vice Chair

Terri Everhart, HomeSite Services

#### Immediate Past Chair

Betsy Sheppard, Gilbert & Sheppard

#### Board of Trustees

Stacy Beers, Pacific InterWest Building Consultants Inc.

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Luellen Smith, Rhino Wine Cellars & Cooling Systems

Meg Thompson, CMP, CSP, TSL Construction LLC

Kerry White, HomeQuest Properties Inc.

Sheila Zentz Stephens, Stephens Homes LLC

### 2021 NAHB PWB Subcommittee Chairs

#### Awards & Recognition

Tina Haro, Environmental StoneWorks

#### Membership & Communications

Leah Fellows, Blue Gypsy Inc.

Luellen Smith, Rhino Wine Cellars & Cooling Systems

#### Professional Development

Lisa Campfield, Homeworks of Alabama

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NAHB Professional  
Women in Building

## Taking Our Places as Leaders

*Women Advocate for Residential Construction and Beyond*

By Emily Boyd

The United States' population is 51 percent female and yet women make up less than a third of our nation's elected leaders. The impact of this underrepresentation is further reaching than one might think.

Role models are key to gender diversity. This "seeing is believing" concept is important for women to imagine themselves taking on or growing into leadership roles. Studies have shown that female students are more likely to choose STEM careers when they are assigned a female professor and that retention of junior-level female employees is highly correlated with the number of female supervisors.

"Women belong in all places where decisions are being made. I don't say [the split] should be 50-50. It could be 60 percent men, 40 percent women, or the other way around. It shouldn't be that women are the exception."

When we see women pursue and succeed in counter-stereotypical roles, society is more likely to promote and encourage other women to do the same. Political office is no exception. 2018 was coined the "Year of the Woman" due to the historic number of women running for and winning political offices in the United States.

### Congresswomen Working to Support the Residential Construction Industry



Yvette Herrell

#### Rep. Yvette Herrell (R-New Mexico)

- Real estate agent
- Past member/family member of NAHB
- First Republican Native woman in Congress



Gwen Moore

#### Rep. Gwen Moore (D-Wisconsin)

- Worked for Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority
- Strong women's rights advocate
- Active on low-income housing tax credit
- Ways and Means Committee member
- Spoke to PWB Summer 2020



Norma Torres

#### Rep. Norma Torres (D-California)

- Led NAHB lumber letter to address price increases in lumber
- When in the state Senate as chair of the Committee on Housing and Community Development, she led an effort that secured \$2 billion in federal funds for the "Keep Your Home California" program, which helped thousands of families keep their homes during the foreclosure crisis



Maxine Waters

#### Rep. Maxine Waters (D-California)

- Democratic leader of Financial Services Committee which oversees housing finance-related concerns
- Led congressional efforts to mitigate foreclosures and keep American families in their homes during the housing and economic crises, notably through her role as chairwoman of the Subcommittee on Housing and Community Opportunity in the previous two Congresses

We see that momentum continuing. Rutgers' Center for American Women and Politics reports that in 2021:

- Kamala Harris is the first woman elected Vice President of the United States,
- Eleven women have been confirmed or nominated for cabinet or cabinet-level positions, and
- Janet Yellen is the first woman to serve as Secretary of the Treasury.

**9** Nine women currently serve as U.S. governors, which ties the record.

**24** In the U.S. Senate, 24 women currently hold office; 60 women filed for nomination in 2020, versus the previous record of 53 set in 2018.

**119** women currently hold office in the U.S. House (the record was 102 set in 2018). In 2020, records were set both for number of women filing and nominated for these seats.

When we see women pursue and succeed in counter-stereotypical roles, society is more likely to promote and encourage other women to do the same.

Underrepresentation of women in public office fails to tap into the full talent and potential that our population has to offer. The diversity of perspective that women bring to the conversation can only be fully leveraged when they have a platform. Equitable policies can only be expected to be created when the people at the table are truly representative of their constituents.

To quote the late Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, “Women belong in all places where decisions are being made. I don’t say [the split] should be 50-50. It could be 60 percent men, 40 percent women, or the other way around. It shouldn’t



Virginia Foxx



Jaime Herrera Beutler



Susie Lee



Marilyn Strickland



Suzanne Bonamici

**Rep. Virginia Foxx (R-North Carolina)**

- Republican leader of the House Committee on Education and Labor
- Passed many bills that benefitted the construction workforce
- Family had a small construction business

**Rep. Jaime Herrera Beutler (R-Washington)**

- Ninth woman to give birth while serving in Congress
- Champions women’s issues in Congress, including improving maternity care and expanding access to childcare

**Rep. Susie Lee (D-Nevada)**

- Member of House Education and Labor Committee
- Strong advocate for education issues and expanding career and tech education

**Rep. Marilyn Strickland (D-Washington)**

- First Korean-American member of Congress who is also of African-American descent
- Ran on the platform of “homes for all,” she promised to advocate for a massive federal investment to help build affordable, workforce, and senior homes in local communities.

**Rep. Suzanne Bonamici (D-Oregon)**

- Cofounder of the STEAM caucus
- Offered legislation to narrow the job-skills gap by authorizing grants to schools and labor apprenticeship programs to bolster in-demand skills training programs.

be that women are the exception.” Rest in Power, RBG. We still have work to do, but we’re on the right track.

To learn more about NAHB’s advocacy efforts, visit [NAHB.org](http://NAHB.org) and search for BUILD-PAC or Builder Link. **BW**



Emily Boyd is director of land acquisition at TRI Pointe Homes in the San Francisco Bay Area and is vice president of the PWB Council BIA Bay Area in California.



## NAHB PWB HONORS MEMBERS, COUNCILS

Each year, NAHB Professional Women in Building Council honors industry leaders, members, and local PWB councils for their leadership, innovation, and community service. NAHB PWB also awards scholarships to council members and students who are taking building related courses or training. For the 2020 award cycle, NAHB PWB provided \$10,800 in scholarships to high school students across the country.

## Achievement in the Face of Challenges

Despite a year filled with uncertainty, NAHB PWB continues to thrive in three key areas.

### Growing local councils

**Achievements:** PWB expanded its community by 12 PWB Councils in 12 states and engaged members throughout the year by hosting virtual meetings so new and seasoned local councils could share success stories and best practices.

### Support the industry

**Achievements:** PWB raised more than \$90,000 to support BUILD-PAC, NAHB's bipartisan political action committee. PWB and BUILD-PAC held joint Member Minute event exclusively for PWB members with Congresswoman Gwen Moore (D-Wisconsin).

### Governance and sustainability

**Achievements:** PWB engaged more areas of the Federation during

PWB Week. Twenty-four PWB members held leadership positions on 14 NAHB committees and councils.

In 2021 NAHB Professional Women in Building is focused on being a leader in the Federation by enhancing efforts to increase diverse and inclusion, as well as leadership development. Let's keep this momentum going. Engage with PWB at the national level.

1. Participate in an NAHB PWB Subcommittee.
2. Join a local council meet up.
3. Access exclusive content for PWB members.
4. Join PWB member discussions on Facebook and LinkedIn. Search "NAHB Professional Women in Building" to find our groups.

Visit [nahb.org/womeninbuilding](http://nahb.org/womeninbuilding) to download the council's event calendar and register for exclusive content.

## Terri Everhart Honored as NAHB Woman of the Year



NAHB Woman of the Year, sponsored by InSinkErator, is the council's most prestigious award. The recipient demonstrates dedication to her association, her profession, her community, and expertise in her field. The 2020 NAHB Woman of the Year is **Terri Everhart**, sales representative for HomeSite Services, for her work promoting the efforts of women who contribute and advocate for the building industry.

Everhart demonstrates extraordinary commitment to the NAHB Federation and to the PWB Council. When a task needs to be completed, she is the first person to volunteer. Everhart has chaired a number of PWB committees, and her involvement demonstrates her passion, desire, and leadership skills.

Everhart has won multiple awards at the local and national levels for membership recruitment and community service. She has been a member of the California Building Industry Association Executive Board and the Building Industry Association Bay Area PWB Executive Board.

In addition to all the advice, support, and time Everhart offers her local board, she also supports other councils and is involved with charitable organizations, including the CHF Building Industry Technology Academy, where she championed its Big Day of Giving.



## Wells Fargo Home Mortgage Member of the Year



**Steph Reed** is the 2020 Wells Fargo Home Mortgage Member of the Year, an award that recognizes the achievement of a PWB member at the local and state level. Reed tirelessly promotes the building industry and shares her knowledge at the local, state and national levels of the NAHB Federation. She epitomizes the member every organization wants: active, knowledgeable, dependable, passionate, driven, and focused. She wants to learn and is equally willing to share her knowledge.

“Her engagement with young people and women in a mentoring capacity is so important to our industry,” the judges commented. “That she has developed her career and expertise in the industry from Realtor to builder and business owner is inspiring. It is evident that she is a true leader!”

### WELLS FARGO HOME MORTGAGE COUNCILS OF THE YEAR

These awards recognize local PWB councils in three size categories for their overall excellence. This year’s winner of the Wells Fargo Home Mortgage Outstanding Council of the Year award in the small category went to **California Building Industry Association PWB** and its 2020 chair, **Mitu Walia**. When the pandemic hit, members were faced with personal and professional challenges. This council expanded its presence on social media, shared newsletters, launched an Instagram profile, and shared member success stories and spotlight videos. They kept their members aware of NAHB safety guidelines and their local HBA legislative efforts to help construction. They shared job opportunities and work-from-home tips.

The CBIA PWB held exceptional virtual programs; their first event had 146 attendees. A virtual happy hour series featured speakers to inspire and motivate members. This enabled members to develop and maintain great business and personal relationships formed through this friendly collaboration of women in the industry.

The winner of the Wells Fargo Home Mortgage Outstanding Council of the Year award in the medium category went to **Central Oklahoma Home Builders Association PWB** and its 2020 chair, **Christy Howell**. The council demonstrated that connecting local leaders, schools, and organizations is beneficial for all involved. Their greatest accomplish-



ment was to organize and produce a Build My Future event. This one-day construction day for high school students connected the council with its community, education providers and students. After the pandemic struck, they pivoted to Zoom meetings and virtual coffees. Their already-established PWB Facebook presence continued to help members stay connected.

The Wells Fargo Home Mortgage Outstanding Council of the Year in the large size category was the **Home Builders Association Greater Des Moines PWB** and its 2020 chair, **Rachel Harm**. The council provided an array of benefits to its members, the HBA, and the community while adapting to the global pandemic. Programs included monthly educational experiences and networking opportunities.

Council members spoke in several schools about PWB, scholarships, and mentorship programs, as well as letting them know about their options in the skilled trades. They provided resources to schools and libraries and launched them online, creating positive experiences for students during the pandemic. The council engaged with youth by putting activity books they created online for parents to print out for their children. They also had videos of kids reading books related to skilled trades.

This council launched its official mentorship program and saw its first protégé become an electrical apprentice. They also conducted several outreach events to promote diversity and inclusion, as well as promoting the skilled trades.

### NEW PWB COUNCILS CHARTERED

Welcome to our most recent affiliated PWB Councils! We are glad you are part of the NAHB PWB community.

1. Bismarck-Mandan Home Builders Association (North Dakota)
2. Builders and Contractors of Southwest Idaho
3. Charlotte DeSoto Building Industry Association (Florida)
4. Hilton Head Area Home Builders Association (South Carolina)
5. Home Builders Association Georgia
6. Home Builders Association of Greater Charlotte (North Carolina)
7. Home Builders Association of Utah
8. Home Builders Association of West Tennessee
9. Kansas City Home Builders Association (Missouri)
10. Madison Area Builders Association
11. Metro Builders & Contractors Association (New Jersey)
12. Wichita Area Builders Association (Kansas)



# New Benefit for All PWB Members

Access specialized education and professional development content and programming, made possible from the BIA Bay Area.

**Register today** to access courses focusing on elevating women in the industry, young professionals, leadership, and business management. Visit [nahb.org/womeninbuilding](http://nahb.org/womeninbuilding) to access this exclusive member benefit.



## Events of Note

**NAHB PWB Annual Awards Call for Entries Opens This Summer**

Visit [nahb.org/awards](http://nahb.org/awards) for more information about all NAHB awards.

**September is Associate Members Appreciation Month**

**NAHB PWB Week**

**Sept. 13-17 [nahb.org/pwbweek](http://nahb.org/pwbweek)**

**October is Careers in Construction Month**

**Women in Residential Construction Conference Fall 2021**

**NAHB PWB meetings and events held in conjunction with NAHB's Fall Leadership Meeting**

**Oct. 14-16, Houston, Texas**

**NAHB International Builders' Show®**

**Feb. 8-10, 2022**

Dates are subject to change.



### NAHB Podcast: Housing Developments

Did you know you can hear the latest on the U.S. housing market and economics right on your phone? National Association of Home Builders Chief Executive Officer Jerry Howard and Chief Lobbyist Jim Tobin discuss the latest developments in housing and NAHB on their biweekly podcast. Topics include housing affordability, housing economics, workforce development issues, the state of the residential construction industry, and much more.

Subscribe to the Housing Developments Podcast wherever you listen to podcasts or go to [nahb.org](http://nahb.org) and search, "Housing Developments" to listen to the latest episode on your computer.



# Minding Your Business

## Empowered to Succeed

*Taylor Morrison Mentors Young Professionals Coming into the Industry*

By Jessica Percel

You are the CEO of your own career. At Taylor Morrison, one of nation's largest home builders, that empowering statement is a mantra that reverberates throughout the company, encouraging employees to build upon their professional goals and desires.

When you join the Taylor Morrison family, you are quickly provided with an abundance of knowledge and tools to assist with training, mentoring, and growth. Employees participate in 101-level classes that give a high-level overview of the various job functions within the company, such as sales, construction and purchasing.

This experience provides employees—especially those with entry-level jobs or who are new to the industry—with a more holistic understanding of how each department works together for the greater mission of the company. It gives a glimpse into a day in the life of fellow colleagues.

**TRAINING:** There is no shortage of resources. From online education and in-the-field training to partnering with DeVry University for extended learning opportunities, Taylor Morrison invests in tools for its employees to invest in themselves. I am enrolled in our DeVry University partnership and begin classes this fall to earn my undergraduate degree in project management.

**MENTORING:** Our CEO, Sheryl Palmer, and senior executives operate with an open-



**Interns in Sacramento, California, and Denver, Colorado.**

Photos courtesy of Taylor Morrison

door policy. They take time to mentor us with information to help us become the best in our fields. We are encouraged to build community relationships, literally and figuratively, and partici-

pate in local and state building associations, all of which helps fuel our professional growth.

Taylor Morrison also mentors high school students eager to enter the industry through its internship program. Recently, our Denver division partnered with the Colorado Home Building Academy to facilitate a construction skills boot camp for students to help foster the next generation of industry workers.

Additionally, our Sacramento division introduced the Construction Trades Pathway Program; six enthusiastic juniors from Natomas High completed a 40-hour, month-long internship program. At our Fiddymet Farm community in west Roseville, California, the teens tried nearly everything that takes place in the field: framing, plumbing, detailing, and electrical work. They also gleaned a wealth of knowledge from Sacramento superintendent Josh Rilling, who provided encouraging and educational insight into the industry throughout the program.

**GROWTH:** Sixteen years ago, I started in the home building industry as a secretary for a pool company. My career with Taylor Morrison began six years ago as a permit coordinator, and now I am a construction coordinator for one of the top five builders in the country. Taylor Morrison gave me the encouragement and opportunity to grow into where I am today.

Both locally and nationally, Taylor Morrison has received recognition as being a great place to work. In fact, Glassdoor, one of the world's largest job and recruiting sites, ranked the company as one of its 2020 Best Places to Work. Taylor Morrison also earned the distinction of America's Most Trusted Home Builder by Lifestory Research, and was the only U.S. home builder that received recognition for its workplace diversity on Bloomberg's Gender-Equality Index. **BW**



Jessica Percel is a construction coordinator with Taylor Morrison. She was honored as the NAHB Young Professional of the Year in February 2020. She

currently serves as the chair for the Young Building Professional (YBP) committee with the Manatee-Sarasota Building Industry Association (MSBIA), vice chair for the Florida Association of Home Builders YBP Council, vice chair for Professional Women in Building with MSBIA, and sits on the Young Professionals Committee and NAHB PWB Board of Trustees.

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# ADDI



Karen with a group of students at Michigan State University

# DING SEATS TO THE TABLE



“**N**ever in my wildest dreams did I consider being a builder,” says Karen J. Schroeder. “It wasn’t even on my radar!” As a young dental assistant in the 1970s, Schroeder had no desire to sell new homes, but a good friend had other plans.

Early on, she had assisted him as he created a new home building company. For her, it was just helping a friend realize his dreams; she didn’t feel connected to it in any way. He tried on numerous occasions to encourage her to consider selling new homes, but as a stubborn 21-year-old, she held her ground. She wasn’t interested.

One day, the same friend stopped by the dental office to take her to lunch. Instead, he took her to take the new homes sales licensing test.

“He stopped in front of the civic center and said, ‘You’re registered to take the test,’” Schroeder recalls. “I was in my dental uniform. I came out after the test and said, ‘I hate you. Now take me to lunch!’”

Two weeks later, he showed up at the dental office again, this time with

**2021 NAHB  
PWB Chair  
Karen J. Schroeder  
is committed to  
increasing diversity**

**BY PAT CURRY**

news that she had passed the test. He gave her a gift-wrapped box of business cards and offered her a job. “It was the first time I ever had business cards,” Schroeder chuckles. “I thought I was pretty hot stuff.”

Over the next 24 years, her career expanded from new home sales to opening a new homes sales division for a real estate broker, working as a marketing director for a production builder, and handling government affairs for the local HBA. She eventually befriended Bob Schroeder, a builder who was leaving his family business.

Around the same time Karen and Bob were thinking of moving, local government approved a developer’s plans to rezone a mobile home development into a site condo community consisting of hundreds of single-family detached homes. The developer, Daryl Kesler, reached out to Bob while Karen was flying home from a conference and basically offered the entire project to them.

“Bob picked me up late from the airport and took me to this field,” she says. “It was pitch black. We went home, just before 11 p.m., and the headline for TV news was ‘New development in East Lansing, Michigan will bail out the school system’. I said, ‘I’m calling Kesler right now. I don’t care it’s 11 p.m.!’”

The next morning, they met Kesler for the first time. Karen and Bob both felt something was missing in their housing market and they wanted to fill that void. The relationship with Kesler began with a handshake.

### Crafting their identity

“We literally started with nothing,” Schroeder emphasizes. However, they had everything set up in a week and then pursued a company name.

“What should we call ourselves? We need something that sticks,” she said at the time. “I remembered Disney did a study and asked people, ‘If you could live anywhere you wanted, where would it be?’ People kept saying ‘Mayberry’. They wanted to feel connected; they wanted that small town charm and to know their neighbors.”

Schroeder sought advice on naming the company, Mayberry



**“I woke up one night and thought, ‘Who are my buyers? My buyers are my kids’ age. How do I connect with them? They text.”**

Homes, from Richard Elkman, founder of the respected home builder marketing firm, Group Two. “He said, ‘If you have the guts to do that, it should work.’”

Elkman quickly became part of the team and created their first logo and advertising to get the company started.

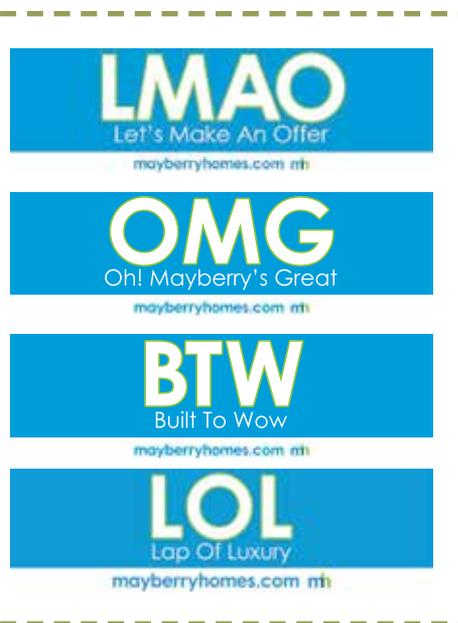
Mayberry Homes hit the ground running and was open for business with their first development called, Hawk Nest. They introduced the traditional neighborhood development concept to

the greater Lansing area. Buyers were enthralled.

“We sold 100 houses the first year,” Schroeder says. It was completely unheard of in their market.

Early successes stemmed from the Schroeder’s equal, yet separate, expertise in the industry. “Too often, production and sales can be like oil and water,” Karen Schroeder explains, “but because of the uniqueness of knowing where we both came from in the industry, we

were able to meld that with a mutual respect for each other. We had a passion that was undeniable for housing at that point.”





Schroeder's background in marketing from her years working with a real estate company helped propel Mayberry Homes forward. From the beginning, she sought the expertise of marketing experts, but also possessed her own savviness to maximize newspaper and radio advertising. As newspapers began to fade, she turned to billboards around 2010. "I'm considered the billboard queen in East Lansing!" she laughs.

One of her most memorable campaigns required precise timing and critical placement of 11 billboards, which all went up at the same time. "I woke up one night and thought, 'Who are my buyers? My buyers are my kids' age. How do I connect with them? They text.'" The next day, she sat down and brainstormed with her billboard representative and said to him, "I see LOL, OMG, and



LMAO, but how do I tie that in?"

Though an expensive venture, it had a huge impact. The boards went up along highways surrounding the Lansing area. Donned in the blue and green company colors, they each displayed the texting

## HONORS

Karen J. Schroeder, vice president and co-founder of Mayberry Homes, was one of the first women and was half of the first couple to be inducted into the Michigan Construction Hall of Fame. Mayberry Homes was named the #1 Builder in North America in Customer Service by Avid Ratings (formerly NRS) in 2006 and continues to be awarded the Gold Award for Customer Experience annually.

In 2004, St. Jude Children's Hospital recognized Mayberry Homes as part of the Volunteer Group of the Year for the Lansing Dream Home. Four years later, the company was honored by St. Vincent's Foster Home for Children with the Ballentine Award for Extraordinary Service to Families and Children. In 2014, they were named Building Partner of the Year by Homes for Our Troops.

Schroeder was named the 2017 Advisory Board Member of the Year by NAHB as a result of her service with Michigan State University. The same year, she was honored by NAHB PWB as Woman of the Year. In 2018, Greater Lansing Business Monthly named Mayberry Homes the Greater Lansing Business of the Year. In March 2021, she received an Honorary Alumni Award from Michigan State University.

Schroeder lives in East Lansing, Michigan; she has three adult children and two grandchildren.

slang in giant letters and nothing else. “To pay those dollars and not have your name on them was scary. And to leave them there for two weeks was even scarier,” she remembers. “But it started picking up traction that I didn’t expect.”

She heard people talking on local radio about the boards, speculating whether they were Mayberry Homes’s.

Two weeks later, the boards all changed. The “LOL” was smaller and “Lap of Luxury, MayberryHomes.com” appeared. “LMAO” was “Let’s Make an Offer.” “OMG” changed to “Oh Mayberry’s Great.”

“It was all over town. It was huge and people kept talking about it,” she says.

With the right product, placement, pricing, and promotion, Mayberry Homes became one of the largest home builders in the mid-Michigan area.

## The power of involvement

Mayberry Homes would not be the company it is today without its commitment to giving back to the local community. “One of our core values is, ‘We believe that with success comes a social responsibility to our team, our clients, and our community,’” says Schroeder.

Over the years, Mayberry Homes helped raise more than \$2 million for St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital by building three Dream Homes. They’ve also built Homes for Our Troops and participated in ABC’s *Extreme Makeover: Home Edition*.

Near and dear to Mayberry’s heart is



the St. Vincent Foster Family Program. One Christmas, a friend asked Karen if she could bake some cookies for a charity. She and Bob baked hundreds of cookies and went to the party. She was struck by how lackluster the event was.

“I went to my friend and said, ‘This is not okay. Next year, Mayberry is doing your holiday party.’” Since 2003, the St. Vincent Holiday Party has become a Mayberry event with food, music, Santa, crafts, gifts and fun.

Schroeder’s entire staff participates and afterward, she takes them all out to decompress. “It is a very emotional night,” she says. “Many of the children are very young, some are ill. I want my staff to always remember we are part of our community.”

## A seat at the table

Schroeder got involved in the National Association of Home Builders early in her career. She heard about the International Builders’ Show (IBS) in 1978 and jumped at the chance to attend. She soaked up the information offered in the classes and meetings, while finding networking opportunities. One of her favorite events was the NSMC Super Sales Rally.

Over time, she became a state and national director. She attended IBS and state conventions but didn’t have the time to attend spring and fall board meetings. About seven years ago, a good friend invited her to attend national spring board meetings in Washington, D.C.

Her friend suggested Schroeder find a meeting that was of interest to her, handed her the guide book of events and meetings, and indicated the two women would meet up for dinner. Her one piece of advice was, “Whatever you do, don’t sit at the table. Sit along the wall.”

When Schroeder walked into the Professional Women in Building Council meeting, she followed her friend’s advice and sat by the wall. Within moments, she made eye contact with Betsy Sheppard, who invited her to the table.

“That was inclusion,” Schroeder says. “To this day, when I see someone sitting

along the wall, I invite them to sit at the table. That is why PWB is growing. We are inclusive. Come join us. We have something to give, and believe you do, too!”

# ADVICE

## FOR THE NEXT GENERATION

For the young people who are just starting their careers, Karen J. Schroeder offers these five vital pieces of advice:

### Follow your heart.

Believe in yourself and have a passion for what you’re doing. “You have to want it, eat it, feel it. Be thirsty enough to drink in the knowledge.”

**Find a mentor that you respect** even if it’s just someone you can call on an occasional basis.

### Set goals

But don’t be hung up on them. Revise as necessary.

**Don’t forget how important a home is to your buyers.**

You’re not just building houses; you’re providing a place for families to make memories. Don’t make them a job number. Find out what’s important to them.

### Join your HBA.

They can connect you with others. When you have time, pick one thing and get involved. Housing has its ups and downs, but it’s a pretty amazing industry with outstanding members.



Karen and fellow PWB members and friends after the 2019 Women In Residential Construction Conference.

(Top) Karen with her grandchildren, Tucker and Sadie (Bottom) Karen and her mother, Marilyn Jones



After attending that first PWB meeting, it became Schroeder's mission to start a local council in Lansing. In a few short months, the council was chartered with more than 30 members and she was the chair. She also found herself immersed in the NAHB Professional Women in Building Council and the NAHB 55+ Housing Industry Council, of which she was the 2019 chair.

Remembering the value of her early education, Schroeder dedicates herself to helping young adults prepare for a career. She has served on

several Michigan State University advisory boards, including MSU's Construction Management Program, Michigan Habitat for Humanity, and the MSU Homebuilding Education Leadership Program.

Now in her mid-60s, Schroeder says she feels strongly that this stage of her career is about giving back.

As the 2021 chair of NAHB Professional Women in Building Council,

Schroeder's goals are to build on the council's strengths and focus on inclusion and diversity. The bonds that are formed in PWB are powerful and she wants other people to experience that connection.

One of the things she thinks NAHB PWB does particularly well is mentoring and leadership development.

### A passion for diversity

She is passionate about increasing the diversity of the council's leadership and says she will do everything she can to make that happen. Coming from a Jewish family that lived in a predominantly Christian community in the 1960s, Schroeder says she was the only child in the neighborhood with a mother who worked outside the home. But her mom didn't have just any job; she was a field investigator for the Michigan civil rights commission.

"I am who I am because of my mom," she says. "I was taught at a very early age about discrimination and bigotry."

She didn't really understand why her mother had to fight for other people's rights until the day swastikas were painted on her

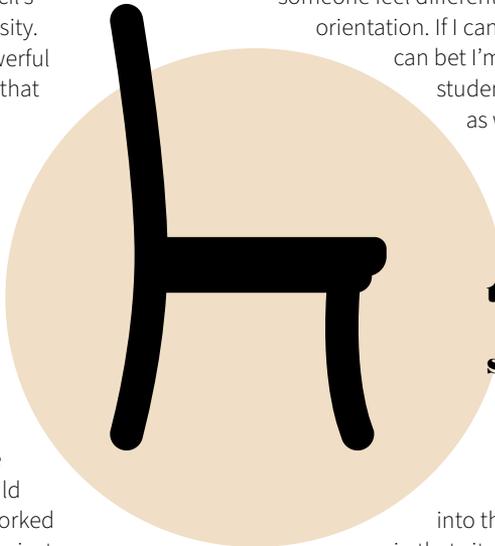


(Top) Karen's children, Jodie, Kori, and Ryan (Bottom) Mayberry Homes team retreat



family's synagogue.

"Two days later, they burned it to the ground and I realized I was different," she says. "That had such an impact. I will never make someone feel different because of their religion, color or sexual orientation. If I can do my little part as chair of NAHB PWB, you can bet I'm going to do it. I'm in a position to mentor students, to open up our council to be as diverse as we possibly can and bring the students up



**"To this day, when I see someone sitting along the wall, I invite them to sit at the table. That is why PWB is growing. We are inclusive. Come join us. We have something to give, and believe you do, too!"**

into the industry. How do we lose? You don't lose in that situation. "I'm very proud that this year's NAHB

PWB Board of Trustees is the most diverse in our history."

NAHB recently formed a task force for diversity and inclusion and Schroeder is proud to be a member. She intends to be instrumental in making changes within the industry. "I believe I can be a positive voice." **BW**

*Pat Curry is managing editor of Building Women.*

# LESSONS FROM LEADERS

## THREE WOMEN AT LOWE'S HIGHLIGHT INCLUSIVITY



BY EILEEN HOULIHAN

Vision. Integrity. Courage. These are all qualities of a great leader. NAHB sat down recently with three women at Lowe's to discuss how these values have transformed their career paths across the home improvement retailer.

"I was able to reach my level of success as a manager through hard work, a great network of peers and mentors, and some great managers that I like to call my coaches," said Ebony Wheeler, a store manager in Mount Holly, N.J. Wheeler was recruited by Lowe's in 2014 and quickly entered the store manager training program.

Wheeler says she learned quite a bit through Lowe's annual Women's Leadership Summits. The summits provide female leaders the opportunity to connect across the company, focus on their development, and hear from executives and keynote speakers. During her Lowe's tenure, Wheeler has worked at four stores in three states.

"Working at Lowe's is not just a job," Wheeler said. "It's a calling

that fits well with all aspects of my life and provides the work-life balance I need to be there for my family." She enjoys what she does, which makes it seem less like work and more of a purpose. "I get the opportunity to make a difference every day."

Lowe's launched its Women's Business Resource Group (BRG), Women Empowered, in 2019 to drive engagement, retention, and development of women at all levels across the organization. The Lowe's BRGs allow for a community of associates and allies to come together, have transparent dialogue, and educate the organization and the public about the issues facing different communities.

"Women in Leadership events encourage and inspire women to grow across the company," said Colleen Gee, a Lowe's regional vice president with 22 years of retail experience. "Lowe's Women Business Resource Group provides support for women at Lowe's, our customers, and in the community," Gee said.

Gee worked her way up through a variety of positions at Lowe's

and enjoys embracing the challenges of her current role, where she oversees dozens of stores in Lowe's North Division. As a champion of Women in Leadership events, Gee says it's important for women at all levels of the organization to network with women in senior leadership roles. "The inclusive environment has allowed me to grow within the organization, achieve my goals and empower others to achieve theirs," said Gee.

Diversity, equality, and inclusion are key commitments at Lowe's. Those commitments form the foundation of the company's culture and extend to every area of the business.

Rochelle Komlosi, Lowe's director of pro national accounts, said she believes in pushing herself to continually learn new things and challenges herself to believe all things are possible. Komlosi plays a key role in Lowe's pro partnerships and has been in her position for a year and a half.

Lowe's is a great place for women to succeed because it gives everyone an equal opportunity to grow their career, she said. "Lowe's encourages diversity at all levels throughout the organization. It is an inclusive environment for leaders to be successful," Komlosi said.

Lowe's fosters that inclusive culture, one that celebrates differences and recognizes diversity of all kinds as strengths. The company says it allows them to better serve their customers and support the diverse communities they serve.

"At Lowe's, we have several Business Resource Groups that are committed to understanding associate engagement and values each associates' unique experience within their job," Wheeler said. "I belong to two groups that are centered around the promotion of development, business improvements, and community for women and Black associates.

**"Be yourself and define yourself by your actions and your leadership; do not try to be someone that you think others want you to be,"**



Colleen Gee



Ebony Wheeler



Rochelle Komlosi

"Group conference calls and forums have allowed me the ability to network across the company to gain a deeper understanding of our current environment within and outside of Lowe's that impacts the way we work," she said. "It's an opportunity to join in on conversations to identify strengths that we need to maintain and to provide opportunities to make improvements."

Growth and success also come from being part of a good team. "I truly believe if you treat your team well, they will become your personal cheerleaders to help you achieve your goals," Wheeler added.

For Gee and Komlosi, mentors Joe McFarland, Lowe's executive vice president of stores, and Scott Matthews, Lowe's vice president of pro outside sales, have been their biggest champions.

"Joe has been a champion of mine since I was a store manager," Gee said. "He challenges me to do more than I thought was possible and has afforded me the opportunity to be successful. When I wasn't getting the desired results, Joe was always there encouraging me to push forward."

"Scott believes in me and gives me the confidence I need to grow as a leader," Komlosi said. Getting to hear from other women leaders at company events has also inspired her. "It's always great to hear from other women about their work experiences and what got them to where they are today."

For women starting out in the industry, these three leaders have some sage advice. "Be yourself and define yourself by your actions and your leadership; do not try to be someone that you think others want you to be," Gee said. "Celebrate your differences and lean into them to help you be successful."

"Push yourself to continually learn new things and challenge yourself to believe all things are possible. Learn about all the different business groups within your company so you aren't always tied to one," added Komlosi.

And Wheeler turns back to that key leadership quality, courage. "My advice to women building a career is to be courageous, be yourself, be resilient, and be open to being coached." She said the best players on the team are always the most willing to practice what they've learned. "Don't give up. You can do it one promotion at a time!" **BW**



Eileen Houlihan is a senior editor at NAHB and a former financial correspondent for Reuters News.

# GROWING

## the **Next Generation** of Industry Leaders

### MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY HAS CREATED A UNIQUE MODEL FOR BOLSTERING INCLUSIVITY

By Leah Fellows



Students today will make up the next generation of leaders in the home building industry. Not only will they lead the profession, but they will also take on the mantle of leading our professional organizations as they continue to evolve.

In professional environments, organizations and councils such as the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB), Professional Women in Building (PWB), Women in Residential Construction (WIRC), National Association of Women in Construction (NAWIC), and Associated General Contractors of America (AGC) among others, it's essential to engage young women to set the stage for innovation and change while creating more diversity and inclusion. This can be accomplished through local and national student chapters on both the university and high school level.

NAHB student chapters have been around since 1971 and they are the driving force behind the annual student competition at the International Builders' Show. Right now, NAHB is affiliated with 84 college and high school chapters, with 582 college and 2,077 high school student members.

Michigan State University's charter dates back to 1979 and in recent years, the chapter added something unique. It forged an alliance with the local PWB council at the HBA of Greater Lansing to form a PWB student chapter with a local affiliation.

"We started having the conversation years ago with the intent to diversify our student organizations," says Dr. George Berghorn, assistant professor of construction management at Michigan State University and chapter advisor for the NAHB chapter and the

Student Builders and Contractors Association. But they were faced with the question of how to make it happen.

Synchronicity was definitely at play when the discussion began. At the time, Lansing-based home builder Karen J. Schroeder was working to set up a PWB Council at her local home builders association. Schroeder, the 2021 NAHB PWB Council Chair, recalled when MSU Construction Management Program Director Dr. Sinem Mollaoglu asked her to be on an advisory board for the student competition team.

At the time, Schroeder thought they just wanted representation from her company, Mayberry Homes. Instead, what Mollaoglu wanted was to bring in women role models.

#### Diversity starts with academic recruitment

Diversity is important to Mollaoglu and it played a key role in choosing where she wanted to be in her academic career. She was the only female teaching faculty member in the construction management program when she started at MSU in 2008. She was drawn there not only because of the wide variety of disciplines under one umbrella, but also because the school included landscape architecture, interior design, and urban planning that drew other women – both faculty and students.

If we want women in the construction industry, she says, it starts with recruitment on the academic level. Historically, only 5-10 percent of the students who enter their program are female. Offering programs that draw more women into the construction realm provides opportunities for diversity in the demographic.



“People look for people like themselves they can relate to and collaborate with,” Mollaoglu says. “If you don’t find communities where you feel related to and feel supported by, you don’t stay for long.”

This becomes a recruitment and retention problem that also applies to alumni boards and is reflected in the profession. “Diversity at all levels is greatly needed,” she says.

Mollaoglu was instrumental in taking the idea of a PWB student chapter and making it a reality. Both Mollaoglu and Schroeder expressed the importance of having an ally within each entity to get the chapter off the ground. Schroeder delved into the structure and process as she worked to set up her local PWB. Mollaoglu had her own set of hurdles to clear, such as obtaining grant funding and creating the program’s internal structure.

As there’s no process in place at this time for national affiliation, it made sense to have a separate, yet connected organization, Berghorn says. “This allowed us to shine more focus on an underrepresented portion of the construction management workforce and start taking strides as a university to build up those young professionals entering into the industry.”

Throughout the process, the lessons learned were shared with other schools looking to start PWB student chapters.

## LESSON ONE

### Make This a Part of Your Appointment Instead of a Side Project

Part of Mollaoglu’s faculty role is to secure grants and develop programs. Winning the Homebuilding Education Leadership Pro-

gram (HELP) Grant from the National Housing Endowment in 2018 allowed her to develop the program and allowed her colleagues, Berghorn and Dr. Matt Syal, to implement a protocol to improve recruitment and retention of women to the program and track the performance over time. Passion met purpose for her as she was able to bring her research, grants and service appointments together to start and lead the program.

“Yes, people do succeed in areas they are passionate about, but if it’s not tied to their appointment, people get busy,” says Mollaoglu. “There needs to be a lead until it starts maintaining itself.” A student advisor needs to take the reins and lead the program until momentum is built. If it’s not part of their job description, momentum can be lost to other responsibilities. In her case, it was catalyzed by the grant as part of her appointment as a faculty member.

## LESSON TWO

### You Have to Have Great Ties with Your Local HBAs

“If you have a PWB chapter in the state or locally, you have to have them on board,” she says. Along with MSU’s first HELP Grant in 2013, her grant team had an advisory board in place. Two of those advisory board members were Schroeder and Cindy Kosloski, chief executive officer of the Home Builders Association of Greater Lansing, who was instrumental in their efforts.

## LESSON THREE

### Recruit a Student Leader

It is important to find a student leader who is passionate,

relatable and draws in other students; helping fund their efforts can be another way to retain them and help them engage with the program. Mollaoglu suggests finding fellowships, scholarships, or hourly work from grants whenever possible and then have them engage with the program and the purpose as graduate assistants or fellows. This way, they can work side-by-side with the student advisor to grow the program.

## LESSON FOUR

### Have a Big Splash for Recruitment and Retention Every Year

Mollaoglu's final piece of advice when starting a student chapter is to host a memorable event early in the fall semester to create excitement. The first event to establish their student group was catered and coincided with the PWB monthly meeting. In collaboration with the local PWB chapter, they set up a speed networking event with industry professionals. Students sat at tables and every 10-15 minutes, the professionals rotated, fielding questions. "At the end of the evening," Schroeder said, "the students would gear up for who they wanted to work with, and you'd become their mentor for the year."

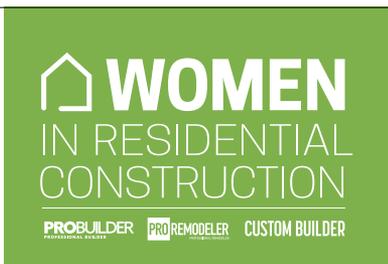
Over the past several months, Mollaoglu received calls and emails from all over the country with inquiries about starting up PWB student chapters. "A lot of it is thanks to Karen Schroeder and how active she is with NAHB," says Mollaoglu. "I think we had a synergy. Everybody was at the same place at the same time, with similar passions. We just happened to be on the same wavelength and good things came out of it."

With women only representing 9.1 percent of the workforce in the US construction industry, student chapters are a wonderful way to provide growth opportunities for younger women. Not only is it a safe space to learn, it also provides sisterhood, mentoring experiences, and help to build confidence as the next wave of women enter the industry.

"Women are wonderful," says Mollaoglu. "You give them a purpose and if they believe in it, they take it over and run with it." **BW**



Leah Fellows is an online sales counselor trainer for the home building industry. She is also co-chair of the NAHB PWB Membership and Communications subcommittee.



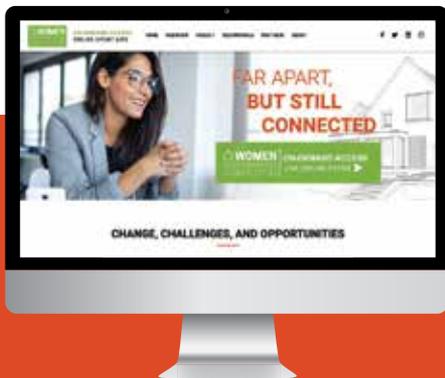
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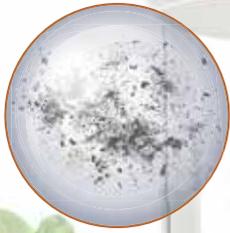
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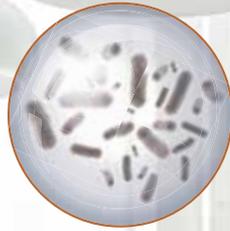
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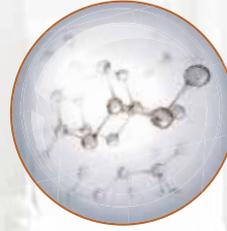
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NAHB **IBS**

## NAHB Professional Women in Building Week

celebrates the achievements of women in residential construction and encourages women to join and enrich the home building profession. All NAHB members can **promote and support women in the industry** by bringing awareness to the opportunities and successes careers in construction provide.

# NAHB Professional Women in Building Week

*September 13-17*



PWB Week Sponsor



Find marketing resources,  
articles and ideas to celebrate at  
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## Coast to Coast

### WASHINGTON

**The Olympia Master Builders PWB Council** hosted a virtual panel discussion about women in politics, featuring female legislators and a county commissioner.



### OREGON

**Home Builders Association of Metropolitan Portland PWB Council** focused on Brené Brown's book, "Dare to Lead" to serve as a theme during quarterly coaching sessions. The council donated two sleeping pods to the Kenton Women's Village, which helps women transition after experiencing homelessness.



### CALIFORNIA

**The California Building Industry Association PWB Council** held a virtual brunch with a panel of industry speakers who discussed careers, legislative impact, and long-term effects on home building post-COVID. Three \$1,000 scholarships were awarded.

**The Building Industry Association Bay Area PWB Council** developed a series of "Sip & Social" mixers as networking opportunities. One event featured a tour of a new mixed-use development, The Hive, followed by a social hour at a beer garden.

**The Building Industry of Fresno and Madera Counties PWB Council** held its annual wine auction virtually. The proceeds provided \$6,750 in scholarship funds for eight students majoring in construction-related fields.



### IOWA

**The Greater Des Moines Home Builders Association PWB Council** launched its official mentorship program. Their first protégé became an electrical apprentice. About 10 women have signed up to be mentors through the program.



### OKLAHOMA

The **Central Oklahoma Home Builders Association PWB Council** has helped with finish selections, cleaning, and decorating tiny homes for Pivot, a nonprofit that helps youth aging out of foster care or displaced out of their control. This year, the council will do some of the same, and commit to providing "Welcome Home" baskets individualized to the young adults as they enter their new homes.

**The Home Builders Association of Greater Tulsa PWB Council** celebrated the centennial of the women's right to vote with an event at a female-owned restaurant. Several elected officials shared their stories about the suffrage movement and obstacles women overcame.





### MICHIGAN

The Southeastern Michigan Home Builders Association PWB Council raised \$28,000 for the PWB scholarship fund and Humble Design/Detroit through a design challenge event that drew hundreds (pre-pandemic). The largest scholarship was named for Carole Jones in honor of her service to the HBA and PWB. This scholarship will be awarded annually.

### OHIO

The Building Industry Association of Central Ohio PWB Council collected holiday gifts for the Family Promise Project, which helped a family experiencing homelessness move into a home and get back to work. Another collection drive will provide socks for people in need.



### NEW JERSEY Shore Builders Association of Central New Jersey PWB Council

helped start a successful effort to promote local vocational school building trades programs, first through visits to middle and high schools, and then through a video to share with the schools.



### FLORIDA

The Northeast Florida Builders Association PWB Council raised more than \$800 for Rethreaded, a local charity helping victims of human trafficking. They also are making masks for frontline health care workers and the community.



### ALABAMA

The Greater Calhoun Home Builders Association PWB Council collected hundreds of toiletry, personal care, and feminine products for two local schools with students in need.

### MISSISSIPPI

The Home Builders & Remodelers of Northeast Mississippi PWB Council performed well checks on its members, sending inspirational quotes and offering support during the pandemic.



## Scholarships Support Undergrads and Industry Professionals

The National Association of Home Builders Professional Women in Building Council

(PWB) represents women across the home building industry. PWB is committed to be a resource for inclusion and diversity within the Federation, as well as to the residential construction industry workforce. In collaboration with the National Housing Endowment (NHE), PWB's scholarship fund encourages individuals

to further their education and training in housing industry-related programs. Three PWB/NHE scholarship programs are available annually to qualified applicants.

### Strategies for Success Scholarship

The Strategies for Success Scholarship provides financial support to qualified students interested in advancing their education in housing industry-related programs. Deborah Ferland, an NAHB PWB past national president, and Austin Ferland initiated the scholarship in 2001.

#### Requirements:

- Applicants must be enrolled as full-time students at the start of the fall semester with at least one full academic year of coursework remaining after the scholarship is received.
- Applicants must be pursuing an education in a housing-related course of study (e.g., construction management, construction technology, civil engineering, architecture, design, trade specialties) at a two- or four-year college, university, or vocational program.
- High school seniors are not eligible to apply.
- Applicants must submit a complete application with two letters of recommendation by the application deadline.
- Preference will be given to applicants unable to afford a college education without financial assistance.
- Preference will be given to applicants who are members of a student chapter of NAHB.
- Scholarship recipients must maintain a minimum GPA of 2.5 (on a 4-point GPA scale) for all courses and a GPA of 3.0 (on a 4-point GPA scale) for core curriculum courses. If a scholarship recipient's GPA falls below the minimum GPA requirement, NAHB PWB's

Strategies for Success Scholarship Selection Working Group reserves the right to cease further funding of the scholarship.

### Building Hope Scholarship

The Building Hope Scholarship provides financial support to qualified students interested in advancing their education and training in building industry-related fields. In 1955, Hope S. Bettlyon, former president of the NAHB Women's Auxiliary (now known as the NAHB Professional Women in Building Council) initiated the scholarship. Local NAHB PWB councils are encouraged to promote the Building Hope Scholarship to students in their communities.

#### Requirements:

- Applicants must be enrolled as full-time or part-time students at the start of the fall semester at a college, university, or trade school, with at least one course or trade-related program remaining after the scholarship is received.
- Applicants must be pursuing an education in a building-related course of study or vocational/trade program.
- Applicants must submit a complete application with letters of recommendation by the application deadline.
- Awards are given for tuition, school/program fees only and will be paid by the NHE directly to the institution.
- Scholarship recipients may be required to provide verification of enrollment prior to disbursement of award.

### Leadership Scholarship

The Professional Women in Building Leadership Scholarship provides financial support to qualified applicants to help defray cost associated with professional development opportunities, including housing- and building-related certifications, designations and licensing fees, travel expenses to NAHB leadership meetings, expenses related to career development, and other building-related programs.

#### Requirements:

- Applicants must be PWB members in good standing.
- Preference may be given to PWB members who have served in PWB leadership roles at the local and/or national levels (i.e., local council chair/vice chair, NAHB PWB subcommittee chair/vice chair, etc.).
- If applicable, proof of course/program registration and/or attendance may be required before award disbursement.
- Learn more at [apply.nationalhousingendowment.org](http://apply.nationalhousingendowment.org)

## How to Give

The NAHB PWB scholarship fund is supported through the generosity of council members, individuals and corporations. To contribute to the fund, visit [nationalhousingendowment.org](http://nationalhousingendowment.org)

# From the Ground Up

HBA executive officers discuss benefits gained by starting a new PWB council.

By Debbie Smith

New Professional Women in Building Councils cannot happen without our executive officers. Their support is the foundation of a council's formation and success. These three EOs shared how starting a new PWB council benefited their HBAs.



**Dawn Watson, Chief Executive Officer of the Bismarck-Mandan Home Builders Association**, is new to her role as CEO but has enthusiasm for helping her new PWB council succeed. "When a board member asked if I would support the start of a PWB, without hesitation, I said yes." Watson said, "I know the value of strong women in business coming together to make a difference."

Watson described how they started by inviting women to a meeting to gauge their interest. At their introductory meeting, 22 women showed up. Now, they have had more than 34 women apply to be members of the council. Almost 50 people gathered in the HBA's backyard to celebrate the launch of their local PWB.

They are the first NAHB affiliated PWB Council chartered in North Dakota. Watson believes women in the building industry need to have a voice. PWB provides a platform for networking, business development growth, education, training, and most importantly, giving back to the community with strategic events and activities.

She is proud of the women who have joined PWB. They came from all different backgrounds in the building industry. "Together, we are going to make a positive impact in our community," she says. "We have put together a strong leadership team that wants to make a difference. Anything I can do as the local executive officer to support them, I will."



**Meg James, Executive Officer of Hilton Head Area Home Builders Association**, found that, for her, the establishment of the Professional Women in Building of the Lowcountry council has been a silver lining through the COVID-19 pandemic. "It felt like we made history on June 16 when our charter was ratified," James says. "We are the very first official chapter in South Carolina. I mean, how cool is that!?" For James, the

PWB charter of female (and male) powerhouses has been a tremendous support system, at the local, regional, and national levels.

As an HBA staff member, she felt it was hard to reach all her members on their level. The PWB Council provides platforms for networking between builder members and associate members.

Typically, their events, whether educational or social, are geared toward company owners and/or salespeople. She finds they miss out on connecting with installers, HR departments, marketing, accounting, laborers, and customer service personnel, to name a few. She found that the PWB Council has been a way to engage with those representatives.

Additionally, because of COVID-19, their large events and social gatherings have been cancelled. The PWB Council allowed for an opportunity to reassure new and prospective members that she can still help them get actively connected with their membership right away!

***"It felt like we made history on June 16 when our charter was ratified."***



**W.V. "Bill" Rauer, Executive Officer of Building Contractors Association of Southwestern**

**Idaho**, notes that introducing the idea of a PWB Council had a profound change on the atmosphere within BCA

membership and helped energize their recruitment efforts. They saw a greater interest from potential members because a PWB Council piqued their interest. Also, members who volunteered to start up the council raised the overall level of enthusiasm for membership across the association, as well as its staff. **BW**

***Introducing the idea of a PWB Council had a profound change on the atmosphere within BCA membership and helped energize their recruitment efforts."***



Debbie Smith is chief executive officer and co-founder of Two Trails Inc., a sustainable consulting firm specializing in green certifications, energy audits, and commissioning for residential, commercial, and development projects nationwide.

# Advertorial

## Successful Workplaces

*Building an Inclusive Environment Across Generational Divides*

By Kristin Johnson

More than ever before, workplaces are made up of a multigenerational workforce with competing communication styles, levels of engagement, and workplace needs. Workers can frequently be found joking about stereotypes of different generations and furthering the division between the groups.

When employers work to foster inclusivity among generations at work, employees feel more engaged and are more likely to contribute to the organization's business results. Inclusive workplaces have employees who offer innovative ideas and unique solutions to problems, strong employee morale, and high levels of employee satisfaction.

So how do we get there?

To foster a collaborative work environment, leaders and business owners must find ways to bridge the gaps between baby boomers, Gen Xers, millennials and the incoming Generation Z to fill those one-size-does-not-fit-all employee requirements, especially when it comes to inclusion.

A true inclusive workplace creates an environment where employees feel welcomed, respected, supported, and valued as team members. Employees work to ensure all coworkers feel as though they belong to the workplace community and that they can be their authentic selves.



"Putting significant work into appreciating and respecting the various generations and creating an environment where each generation is represented and respected for its contributions to your team can increase inclusivity — if it starts from the top down," says Juli Bacon, president of JB Consulting Systems and several other businesses.

A truly diverse workforce embraces

diversity of many different factors, including age, ethnicity, disability, race/color, language, and gender, just to name a few. Studies have shown that organizations composed of individuals and teams with a diverse mix of experiences, capabilities, and work styles tend to have a broader set of ideas, perspectives, and approaches to issues. This enhances the performance of the team and innovation within the business.

"Employers have often thought that bringing in 'new blood' to the organization would help give their workplace some added depth," Bacon says. "The same goes for those employers who build teams with a diversity of experience, work styles, race, gender, and other factors. When solving a problem, you need to look at it from several different perspectives. A diverse team will approach a problem in a more holistic manner."

When an organization can harness and capitalize on those attributes, it can disrupt the tendency to follow the same old patterns or processes and break the mold, leading to a dynamically inclusive environment.

However, multigenerational tension can still exist and derail team productivity if there are generational conflicts between younger and older workers who present differing styles of work habits. While allowing jokes such as "OK, boomer" or stereotypes about "lazy millennials" may seem funny in the moment, these can quickly further the multigenerational divide. Managers must work to stop inaccurate perceptions between generational workers and establish clear and constructive channels of communication.

As Bacon considers working with her own team or clients, she understands that inclusivity can't just be the next buzz word. It takes time, focus, patience, and concerted effort throughout the organization to cultivate inclusivity.

Here are some tips and topics to con-

sider that Bacon has used in her own team to create inclusion within generational workgroups:

1. Build a sense of belonging between all employees.
2. Value the experience each employee brings to the table and use that to the advantage of your workplace.
3. Understand the general motivators of different generations. Millennials and Gen Z tend to want frequent performance communication while baby boomers generally don't feel the need to discuss performance unless there is an issue.
4. Encourage two-way mentorship across multigenerational employees and encourage employees to be open to new ways of thinking.
5. Discourage assumptions and reject stereotyping of any kind and instead focus on positive attributes of each generation. Do not tolerate negative stereotypes to be discussed in the workplace.

Management must be thoroughly invested in the process; not just in theory, but in practice.

As with all business practices, no one model works better than another in every situation. An approach that works in construction and building may need to be modified for a different environment. But one thing remains true: If leaders ignore the importance of building strong teams or incorporating inclusive environments, there will be ramifications, such as higher turnover rates and difficulties in hiring and recruitment.

The benefits of a multigenerational workforce are great and can lead to far greater business success when those employees feel valued and included. **bw**

Kristin Johnson is a senior HR consultant at JB Consulting Systems.



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## Telling a Brand Leader's Story

*Morgan Anderson Fills a Key Marketing Role for InSinkErator*

Performing the marketing functions within a company that has been in business for 83 years as a category leader can be a very demanding role. Integrated Marketing Manager Morgan Anderson has been in this key role for five years at InSinkErator, performing marketing functions that encompass and support a wide range of brand-building activity for the Wisconsin-based manufacturer of garbage disposals and hot water dispensers. She has taken on projects such as developing multi-channel go-to-market strategies for new products, implementing marketing programs and campaigns, and developing new training programs. Additionally, she manages all trade shows and association events.



For Professional Women in Building, Anderson oversees one of the most important events InSinkErator sponsors each year, the annual SPIKE event held in conjunction with the International Builders' Show. In addition to approving the site with PWB leadership, Anderson acts as host of the event for InSinkErator. At this event, PWB leaders reconnect and build friendships that have proven to be the hallmark of the council.

"In our business, the relationships we form are key, and due to the great representation across many industries in this council, we learn a great deal through our sponsorship," Anderson said. "It is also important to provide women a place to

network and collaborate in both a professional and casual setting, and PWB does a great job of facilitating that."

With such a varied role at the company, maintaining the InSinkErator brand and its leadership position within the disposal and hot water dispenser categories comes with its own set of challenges. "We have to provide relevant content to a broad range of customers in trade marketing, and we have to do it often within a short time

frame," Anderson said. "It definitely keeps me on my toes, but who doesn't love a good challenge?"

Asked to describe what is most rewarding

about her position, Anderson pointed out "the associations and friendships I have made with PWB members. They appreciate what we do. Also, when working with the professional audience, the impact is seen immediately. We impart knowledge to help our customers grow."

InSinkErator has developed a corporate culture that values the contributions of all employees, especially those made by women. Women play key roles in sales, marketing, accounting, finance, customer service, supply chain, engineering, product development, and product management.

This year, InSinkErator is the premier sponsor of NAHB's Woman of the Year Award.

Visit [insinkerator.com](http://insinkerator.com) to learn more about InSinkErator and review their product offerings. InSinkErator is a division of Emerson Electric, EMR (NYSE). **BW**



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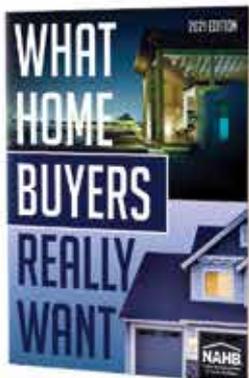
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## Cracking the Cement Ceiling

Insights from Leading Women in Building and Construction

By Monica Wheaton

As a woman who's been in home building for most of my life, I recognize we've made strides in the industry. But there's still a long way to go.

At IBSx, I hosted a panel with several women leading the way in building and construction. We explored issues that women face and shared advice on how to keep moving forward. Here are some of the key takeaways.

### Being heard

No matter how long you've been in the industry, it can still seem like you're not being heard.

One of the most damaging stereotypes is that, as a woman, you inherently don't know what you're doing or that you know less than a man in the same position. With this idea lurking in the background, you think you need to know everything. Hesitation can seem like a weakness. And when you feel like you're already behind the curve, this can create even more self-doubt.

But you can't yield to external pressures. It's okay that you don't know everything because nobody does. Nothing is wrong with saying you don't know and being honest about it. Be willing to ask questions; give yourself room to continue learning and growing.

"If you're a young woman coming into the workforce, you're coming in with a lot of young men who don't have any idea what they're talking about either," says Sunny Bowman, owner and president of Dakota County Lumber Company in Farmington, Minnesota. "You understand that we're all learning together."

### Finding balance: career and home

Raising a family and having a career can seem like they're at odds sometimes, but it's important to know that you can do both. Seek out opportunities where you have flexibility to integrate career and family. Ask for help when you need it. Don't let yourself feel defeated if you can't live up to your expectations of the "perfect" mom or employee.

Honestly, no one can.

"It took a long time for me to realize that I could have both and that it was just a matter of integrating my career and my family," says Angela McKay, vice president of customer experience at builder analytics firm Anewgo in Holly Springs, North Carolina. "It made me a better person and mother having the fulfillment of a career."

Keep your long-term goals top of mind by thinking about each part of your life as seasons. When your kids are young, that's one season where you may be more focused on things at home. When they get older, you enter a new season, where you can take advantage of and explore different career options that you might not have had earlier.

### Be yourself

One of the biggest myths in the industry is that you need to act like a man or be extra-tough to compete. Women have been socialized to be more empathetic and to listen to others. You may be tempted to temper these skills, but don't. They're strengths you bring to the table. Take full advantage of them because they'll serve you well in leadership positions.

"Don't try to be a man because it doesn't work," says Emma Shinn, vice president of Colorado-based Shinn Consulting and Builder Partnerships. "You have special skills that allow you to contribute in a different and a positive way than a man. You don't want to lose that."

Take the time to understand who you are and recognize that what you have to say is important. You can be whatever you want to be if you focus on your goals and you're willing to work hard. With this perspective, you can cut through the noise around you and excel.

Ultimately, don't try to be someone you're not. Embrace who you are and be confident in your skills, experience, and perspective.

### Moving forward

As we continue to face obstacles in a male-dominated industry, a great way to support one another and take the next steps

in your career is by connecting with others.

Whether it's having a champion in your organization to help you navigate your company or joining an organization such as Professional Women in Building, finding a way to share experiences and learn from those who've been in your shoes is important for moving forward.

"Find that tribe — and that tribe is huge," says Carrie Roeger, president and owner of Georgia-based White Stone Residential. "They're right next door to you, they're in your town, and they're also on the other side of the country. They'll reach out and give a hand and help you up."

Listen to the full "Women in Building & Construction" panel and hear from women cracking the cement ceiling at [www2.ecisolutions.com/women-in-building](http://www2.ecisolutions.com/women-in-building). **BW**



Monica Wheaton is the director of customer success for the residential home construction division at ECI. Contact her at [mwheaton@ecisolutions.com](mailto:mwheaton@ecisolutions.com).

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The Utah Chapter of the NAHB Professional Women in Building (PWB) is designing and constructing a home that will be showcased in the 2021 Utah Valley Parade of Homes. The goal for this home is to highlight and utilize women professionals, skilled tradeswomen, and women-owned companies for all stages of the project.

The proceeds from the sale of the home following the Parade will be divided between scholarships for women pursuing education in a construction-related field, women-focused charities, and future projects that support the PWB.



**Follow the project's progress:**

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**UtahPWB.com/The-House-That-She-Built**

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Stay tuned for the children's book inspired by The House That SHE Built.



The goal is to showcase the women who are currently working in new home construction as a beacon and example to others. Women and young girls will be able to see these examples and realize there is a space for them to participate in home building, in whatever aspect they choose.



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