SWE GRASSROOTS ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Stacey DelVecchio Interview

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Society Of Women Engineers National Conference

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Stacey DelVecchio is the additive manufacturing product manager in the Analytics and Innovation Division of Caterpillar Inc., where she has worked since 1989 after receiving a chemical engineering from the University of Cincinnati. A Fellow life member of the Society of Women Engineers, after joining SWE in 1994 she represented her employer on the Corporate Partnership Council and served the Society as the strategic planning committee chair, national treasurer, and as the Society's national president in FY14. During her tenure as SWE president, she secured a special assignment at Caterpillar to create and implement a worldwide engineering talent strategy. She has also served as the secretary of the American Association of Engineering Societies' World Federation of Engineering Organizations' women in engineering committee and advocates for greater diversity in the Manufacturers Alliance for Productivity and Innovation. The Manufacturing Institute recognized Delvecchio's leadership by granting her its STEP Ahead Award in 2015.

In her 2010 SWE Grassroots Oral History Project interview, DelVeccho discussed the supportive environment she experienced from her parents and at the University of Cincinnati in the 1980s. She described her career at Caterpillar and transitioning to management, and how small experiences in the workplace and ingrained sexist attitudes in society led her to become more involved in the Society of Women Engineers. She also explained how her leadership experiences in SWE improved her management skills in the workplace, and what skills women engineers should cultivate in order to be successful in their careers.

- July 2016

Troy Eller: Okay, today is November 3rd, 2010. This is an interview with Stacey DelVecchio. She is the manager of the Project Management Office in the Large Power Systems Division of Caterpillar, Inc. She is currently the treasurer for the Society of Women Engineers [SWE] and she is active in the Central Illinois Section of SWE. This is interview is being conducted as a part of the Grassroots Oral History Project for SWE. We are in Orlando, Florida for the SWE national conference and the interviewer is Troy Eller. Thank you for being here, Stacey.

Stacey DelVecchio: Glad to be here.

TE: To begin with, can you tell me where you were born and raised?

SD: So, I was born in Middleburgh Heights, Ohio, which is a suburb of Cleveland, Ohio. And born and raised there in the same area. My family's still all back there.

TE: Okay. And can you tell me what your parents did and if that had any affect on why you decided to become an engineer?

SD: So, my parents owned a small nursery, like plants and stuff. Very small, you know, like maybe ten employees in the busy time or something. And I would say that affected—well, they were not engineers. My father had some college education but didn't finish his degree, and my mom did have a degree in business of some sort. So, it had an affect because they supported me in education. They always encouraged me in going to college. You know, they made sure that every kid went to college, and knew that I really liked math and science and kind of helped me reach out to see what the profession was and that

sort of stuff. And then also just instilled in me as far as, Go for it, you can do anything, you're smart, you've got your act together. So from that aspect it wasn't specifically about engineering, but it was about going on and doing what I wanted to do.

TE: Okay. Can you tell me what interests or subjects you had in school?

SD: So, my two big passions in school were music—so, I played clarinet, and then also picked up saxophone and flute and I played organ and stuff like that. And so I enjoyed it. I was fairly good but I never thought that I was good enough that I could make a profession out of it. So, I had always planned that I was going to minor in music. I didn't know what I was going to major in, but I loved, loved, loved, loved math. Always loved math, loved numbers, loved doing math in my head. We did little oral tests when I was in grade school and—you know, just absolutely loved math. And so that was where—well, what do you do with math? I didn't want to teach. So, you know, we always lump math and science together, but I really, really liked math.

TE: Okay. How did you learn about engineering and decided that you wanted to go on to study engineering?

SD: So, as you know, I took tests in high school as far as the placement tests—what you might be interested in, that sort of thing—but didn't necessarily get a lot of coaching in high school. I mean, maybe some. I would come up as being—engineering would be an option. It was more so from—my parents had

some friends and one of my uncles, some friends that were engineers and an uncle that was an engineer. And I think it was just primarily my uncle kind of talking to my dad saying, “You really need to point her in this direction.” And then we had this family friend who I went and shadowed him and kind of—so it was, I didn’t know what it was. I mean, I think it’s still hard to explain to people what engineering is. But it certainly was better than anything else. So, that’s not something I would say on any interview with an employer, you know. It’s like, “Well, I didn’t know what else to major in.” But, you know, it certainly had all the aspects from an educational standpoint.

And then when I went to choose my college I went to University of Cincinnati, that has a mandatory co-op program. So you cannot get a degree there unless you co-opped, and it’s really good. So, they’re vested in finding everybody a job because, otherwise, they won’t graduate anyone. And I wanted to do that because after your first year you started co-opping, and I really wanted that so I could see what an engineer did. So, I kind of took a blind job because I didn’t know what I wanted to do. And it sounded like, okay, at least it had the right components of it.

TE: Okay. What was your experience as a woman engineering student at the University of Cincinnati?

SD: So, as a woman engineering student I didn’t have any issues. So, I started in college in ’82 and graduated in ’87 and I was not a member of SWE. And I was a member of American Institute of Chemical Engineers and we had a big

professional engineering, like, homegrown kind of organization. So, I had a lot of friends from there. I had some other friends. One of my roommates was in aerospace engineering and didn't really have— you know, you hear some issues about women aren't encouraged and that kind of stuff, and their professors are telling them nasty things. And I didn't really have an issue. I came from a family that was just, you know, kind of gender blind and just, Go ahead and do it, do whatever you want. So, in college I didn't notice an issue, which is why I didn't join SWE. I didn't want to make a big deal of the fact that I was a woman. It wasn't until later that I kind of thought SWE might be able to help me out some.

TE: Okay, okay. Did you have any mentors when you were in college, or anyone who supported you?

SD: So, probably the closest thing I had to a mentor would have been some of the people that I worked with when I co-opped. There was one gentleman, in particular, who was an alma mater of my school and, you know—maybe, I don't know if he was like 7 of 8 years older than me or something—and kind of would give me some coaching. "Oh, you should take a look at taking these classes," or, "Oh, you should be asking—." When I would be on my co-op station, you know, "Oh, you should ask for more variety in your assignments," or something like that. So, he would be the closest thing. I didn't really have a mentor as far as a professor or any of that sort of stuff. I mean, in hindsight I think I don't know—I didn't necessarily struggle. I mean, I had decent grades and, you know, not as a good of grades as I did in high school, but decent grades. And it just—I think I

maybe could have enjoyed it more had I had more of a mentor, somebody in the academic world or something.

TE: Okay. When you were in college what did you envision your future career as being? Where did you think that you would end up?

SD: So, I feel like I took a while to figure out what I did envision it to be. Which, I know, is—maybe sounds odd. But, I had a brother who's three years younger than me and I think from the time he was like seven he wanted to be an engineer and he had always envisioned that. And I didn't know, you know? So I kind of went into engineering because I was like, okay, you know, I'm encouraged to do it, and math and science, and great support at home. And when I was in college then, at first I thought, Well I don't want to go out and necessarily work in a factory, I don't see myself doing that. So, I thought maybe research. That would be something that would be more akin to what I knew of science, coming from a high school arena. Which is why I really wanted a co-op, so I could try this stuff.

And so my first co-op job I worked at GE Plastics in western Massachusetts and was doing research and didn't like it. (laughs) Because it was just too much on a micro-scale and, you know, just a lot of trial and error and it took a lot of time to find out that your trial was an error because you had to do it so many times. So then I left GE in order to get something different and went to work for a company called Ashland Chemical, which is really—.

They do what a chemical engineer—I was doing process design. So, you know designing: Okay, we want to add on new reactors, and how would you plumb it

up and how would you do it into existing facilities. And in that I felt a little bit over my head in, because I felt like I didn't have this background. So, some of this I just kind of felt like I floundered some, and this is going through, you know, co-opping and into my first job when I graduated.

I was just kind of—I really, really struggled if somebody were to have said, Where do you see yourself in 5 years or 10 years or whatever? I genuinely didn't know. And it was, I don't know—later on in my career I found that, and I feel now I've been more successful because I have some of this. I know what I'm good at and I know what I want to do. But it really ended up being kind of a, I don't know—I didn't struggle like as if, "Oh, I felt I'm just a failure," or anything. But I just never really found my place until a few years into my career.

TE: Okay. Can you tell me how you got your job at Caterpillar and what your first job responsibilities were?

SD: Okay. So I had—I was working at GE in school and then Ashland Chemical in school. And when I graduated I went to work at Ashland and, you know, just kind of knew it wasn't quite the right fit. But I was like, Okay I'll go to work for them. And at the time I was dating somebody, who is now my husband, who had found a job at Caterpillar. And so it was kind of one of these things where I didn't know what was missing from my job until I went to interview at Caterpillar—and I did go to interview at Caterpillar because I was following my boyfriend at the time, who is now my husband—and went on a plant trip for an interview and just kind of fell in love with what I saw in the plant trip. And so it was just really hands on. It

wasn't necessarily in a factory, like we're pumping out engines, that sort of thing. But it was just hands-on making parts at a step farther down the development than the research stuff that I had been doing at GE. And so it was just like, you could see your results earlier.

And there were a lot more young people, which I had never—the two other companies I'd worked with there hadn't been as many young people and it wasn't something that I realized I would have wanted or missed. There were a lot of women, and I didn't realize that. Once again, it wasn't something that I needed or missed until all of a sudden I was in an environment that had that. And I was like, "Oh, well this is really supportive, much more encouraging."

And so it was just like all of these things fell together. And I think—because when I went to interview for it and I was like, "Oh my gosh, this is so awesome," that it just—. I mean, from what I've heard since I've been there it came across as, "Well, we really want to get this person." And I was just like, "Oh man! You know, this is awesome!" So, yeah, it's just a bunch of different circumstances that really helped me find the right spot.

TE: Okay. Can you explain how you transitioned to management?

SD: So, I would say right about the time I was doing my first team lead spot, which would have been maybe 10 years or so into my career—maybe not quite that much—and would have a couple people actually working for me. So, maybe like a team of four or five or something. And, you know, we do actually do leadership

training at Caterpillar but sometimes it's a little hit or miss. Or sometimes it's after you have your job, just because the class isn't offered. And so it would have some of that, and that would help me, but I think a lot of times with the leadership it's going through and doing it and having experience with it. So, the transition was just kind of—you're faced with it and, boom, you gotta run with it. And so there was that.

I think my first leadership job, which I'm thinking is similar to other people, that you're still in the situation where you're still responsible for some of your own work. It's not like you're delegating everything else out there. So you've gotta do this balance between, Okay, I'm doing some of my own analysis, or some of my own data crunching, or running tests, or whatever. And plus I've got these people I've got to guide. It's like one of the toughest things, and it's always the brand new leader that has to get it. So I suffered with some of that, just trying to learn the technical aspect of the details.

And it was right at that same time that I had one of my first terms as my [SWE] section president. And so I think, you know, we always hear a kind of cliché as far as, Oh, it's a great chance to try out some leadership skills. But it really was because there were some things that I did that just kind of helped to build that up. And I think shortly after I did this—so now I'm maybe in my ten year time frame, so I'd still say in that transition piece—I volunteered to be a shop foreman.

And so I was on second shift, which is our evening shift. And I really wanted to do it because, as engineers, there's always a little bit of, you know—the guys on

shop floor would say, Oh, the engineers don't have a clue, they're not grounded in reality, they don't know how to make something. And so I just wanted to work on the shop floor so that I could be like, "Yeah, I've been there with you getting parts out the door." And I really do think that that experience shaped me because it was a turning point in my career as far as just some of the really, really—it's just things that a lot of managers, supervisors, whatever, don't think are important. You know, little things that really do make a difference.

And I think when you're—and I don't mean any of this disrespectfully—but when you're dealing with somebody who's got a very mundane job, those little things become magnified. So they certainly do affect people that may be, you know, managing engineers. But as somebody on the shop floor it's like they pick up on all those stupid little things. I mean, I had a guy where there was a tub—metal tubs, that's how we transport parts at Caterpillar—and it was in his aisle or something. I don't know. And the day shift guys were always putting the tub in the aisle. So, I went in on days and I told the guy to move the tub so that it wasn't in the aisle. I mean, you know, explaining it, it just seems like this is genuinely nothing, but nobody had taken the time to do that before. And he's my friend for life because I got his tub moved. I think that just really honed it in with me then as I moved on from there, then into more management, that you can't forget protecting those people and taking care of them. Because, as you get bigger and bigger groups, they're the ones that do the work. And you just kind of keep the ship steered.

TE: Okay. I noticed on your resume that you had—in 2008 you were a recruiting and hiring manager.

SD: Yes.

TE: I was wondering if you learned anything or gained anything from that experience.

SD: So, part of it—I work right now in a very large division that, we make the engines at Caterpillar. So we were in a hiring frenzy because things were taking off. It was right before things got really bad in the economy. But at the time things were like really booming. And I think some of what I learned from that is just the incredible need to make things simple and clear and make sure that you're listening to the people that you're trying to serve.

So, in this case, the people that we're trying to serve, one would be the students, and make things simple and easy so that there's not an issue with them getting applications in and all the red tape—we're a big company so there's red tape. And then, an unfortunate part is that we didn't quite get to where we needed to because the economy did fall out shortly after that. But, then the other people that I worked with were the hiring managers. And just, once again—and it's the same kind of thing. Make it simple, get rid of the red tape, try to find the right person. And, it just all seems like really straightforward stuff but, when you're in a really big company it's just hard to get rid of that red tape. And then finding the right person for the job is just, you know, to have that hiring manager say something like, "I want an engineer with five years' experience that knows how to

do Pro/E [software] and has good analytical skills." Well, I mean, that's really vanilla stuff and you could get them 10 people like that and they're still not getting what that person wants because it's hard to articulate what you really want. Trying to articulate that is just—it made me appreciate some of the things that sound simple but are really difficult to execute.

TE: What was your experience as a woman engineer at Caterpillar?

SD: So, I talked earlier about in college, I wasn't a member of SWE and didn't really see the need for it. Part of my general personality is I tend to be a little naïve and I'm very much a glass is half-full kind of person. So I just was kind of, "You know what, my parents are supportive, I can do anything." And I graduated in the '80s, "This is the 80s, these issues are behind us," and all that type of stuff. And, so there might have been issues in college and I was just completely naïve to them because by my nature. But then when I got into the work force there were just a couple things, small things. Like, I was one of the only engineers in my engineering group doing all this design stuff. You know, like a hundred engineers and I was the only woman, so it wasn't like it was—there's two of us. So, not like I felt isolated, but on the same hand I would go and try to coordinate some things and they'd say, you know, the people reserving equipment or things said that I couldn't do it, I needed to send my boss. And I'm positive it was because I was a woman and they thought that I was an administrative assistant versus an engineer. So, just some of these little thing.

I think the thing that just kind of slapped me in the face with it was—I had support from my peers, especially some of them that were the same age. But you know once again, being a little bit naïve, the thing that really slapped me in the face was when I got promoted the first time at Caterpillar—and I don't know if it was early or late compared to my peers, maybe a little bit earlier—but nobody said congratulations. And the only people that said congratulations were my friends that were women or genuine friends. None of the men had said congratulations. And so it just kind of was like, "What the heck is going on?" And, you know, there was a perception I was getting special treatment, which I did not think I was.

So, it's genuinely been a positive experience. You know I have little pet peeves and everything, and wonderful, wonderful opportunities. But I think some of that is just kind of knowing when to pick a battle on something [that] maybe might not be truly just versus, You know what, people are people and there are times when everybody treats another individual unjustly and it's not because of your gender.

TE: So, is that what prompted you to join SWE, or—?

SD: So, yeah, the whole promotion thing was what prompted me to join SWE. I did have some friends that were chartering our section in central Illinois. So, some of it was just like, Well you know my friends are doing this. You know, go ahead and go along with it. And then just some of the other things. It was almost more—I think the real driving thing initially was the piece of—I would hear from some of my coworkers who were fathers about—my boss at the time had a daughter who was going to college, and he's like, "Well, I really don't care if she gets her

degree because her boyfriend's going be a dentist." And I'm thinking, this is 1993. And I mean, I'm like, I can't believe that. Because here was my boss, who I considered a mentor that supported me, I felt I got good assignments and everything. And he's giving his daughter, who really wasn't that much younger than me, that advice. And I compared it to what my father and what my mom and dad had done for me, and that was just—those words never would have come out of their mouths.

And so shortly after this my sister had a little boy. And I think he was 4 or 5, and she's telling him, you know, "Oh, Aunt Stacey's an engineer," and all this type of stuff. And he's like, "Aunt Stacey can't be an engineer because she's a girl." And he's really little. So he was born in '90, so yeah, this would have been '95 or '96. And so my sister's going back and forth with him and we can't figure out where this came from. And she's like, "Well, don't you want the smartest people to be the engineers?" and he's like, "Well, I guess that's okay as long as the boys get the corner office." And I'm just like—where in the world is this coming from?

And so it just really made me realize how unique my upbringing had been, to be so supportive, and that there's just so many other things out there, influencers on kids. You know, if they don't have real strong parents telling them that, "You can fly to the moon if you want to," and then where are they supposed to get it? You know? Or you still hear stories today about little kids, that their teachers—little girls where the teachers tell them, "Oh, don't worry about being good in math or science, because you're probably not going to need it." You know, in 6th grade

they're crippling them from becoming engineers. And so that was really my kind of driver, that I listened to some of the things that were going wrong with these other kids that didn't happen to me, and I was like, This is wrong. (laughs)

TE: When you joined the SWE section in central Illinois, did you think at the time that you would get very involved in the leadership of SWE, both at the section level and also region and national?

SD: (laughing) No, never. So, you talk to some of these women, they're like, "I was in college and I wanted to be SWE president." And I was like, never, never, never thought that would happen. I mean I joined and did a lot with the outreach stuff. That was my driver initially. And then, you know, did—I mean I had been really involved in Central Illinois, done all these different offices, and really had a lot to do with, I think, the strength of the section right now. But, it wasn't until Caterpillar started. You know I had been involved as, I think I was president [of the SWE Central Illinois Section] at the time. And Caterpillar had created a new office or something for diversity and was looking at joining the [SWE] Corporate Partnership Council that had just been formed, and wanted somebody who was in the engineering ranks to be one of the people to sit on the chair. And so I really think that it was after that happened, and I got to come and listen to some of the SWE leaders, particularly Betty Shanahan. And she'd get up and always give a headquarters update and talk about all these things going on And it just was like, this is all like really relevant and kept very current and up-to-date. And so it really drove my passion to do some other things in SWE and continue to expand from

there. So, that wasn't until like, you know, 2002 or 2003. So early on never, never, never. I never would have thought that would have happened.

TE: Can you tell me about how you transitioned from being active within your local section to being active within the region and now nationally?

SD: So, part of it—so, I'm not sure I transitioned very well because the way I did it was I just stayed active in the section and the region and then started doing some national chair stuff. So then I was in like all three and just doing everything. Which is kind of fun to do, and it wasn't until—this is my first year on the board and I thought, No, I really need to make sure that I don't overcommit myself, which I have a habit of doing. And so I consciously kind of stepped down from the local chapter, local section and region as well.

And I think part of it was okay because it had been several years since I had been [section] president and I, you know, had—there was a good group of leaders on board to do that. And so we had gotten to the point where we were sustaining and it wasn't just, "Oh, we're doing all this stuff because Stacey's really involved." So, yeah, I felt like it ended up being a nice progression to the point where maybe I could have run for the board earlier and just had never done that.

TE: Okay. Can you tell me what you've learned by being—by taking on these leadership roles?

SD: So, first of all there's some really amazing people out there. There's also, you know, one person can make a difference. You know, they can come up with a new idea. Or there's some women I've met that are just amazing at, you know, rallying a group around to go and do something, or putting plans in place and hammering it through themselves to make something happen. So, there's that piece of it. And then it's kind of they—not everyone's going do what they say they're going do, for the most part. And I think my mom does a lot of volunteer work and she gets really frustrated, "This person said they were going do this." And I was like, "You know, if you just make peace with the fact that probably not everybody is going to do what they say they're going do. And then, when you have that one person on your team of 10 that does everything and asks for more, then just consider yourself blessed."

And so it just kind of goes to the mindset of, you know, If you get done half of what you're going to do you're probably going to be better off than if nobody is going to do it. And then with that though, if you put people's names next to it with dates, it just does drive more action. And I'm a real big one on—I usually will not pick it up and do it myself if somebody says they're going do it, so I'll keep bugging them and so, sometimes it's really frustrating. But I probably get more people to deliver on what they said they were going to do than if somebody had just kind of put it out there and said, "Suzy's going do it," and she never did it.

TE: Okay. What skills have you been able to take back to your job?

SD: I would say the biggest one is motivating a team because, you hear time and time again if you're in a volunteer work force that, People aren't getting a paycheck, and so it's hard, you know, you can't tell them what to do. Which—I still think, you know, there's a commitment level, so holding people accountable is not a bad thing, even if they're not getting a paycheck. But because of that aspect of it, you do have to be a little bit more creative in how you motivate people and make sure that people rally around the cause. And, you know, I think—and those are all great things to take back to the work force, I mean that doesn't really matter. Rallying around a cause is a good thing whether or not it's volunteer or at work. And so that's been really helpful.

And I think the other thing is being direct. So, a lot of times people say, Well it's a volunteer, they're not getting paid so I can't tell them they have to have that done by January 1. And, it's like, Just because it's a volunteer organization doesn't mean that you can't have strong leadership. And so that's—my SWE opportunities have given me I think some more specific things to demonstrate strong leadership, even in a volunteer organization, and get results that give me the confidence to do the same type of leadership back at the workplace. So it goes both ways.

TE: Okay. And you've been in management and leadership positions in the workplace for a decade at least, more than a decade. What is it that you enjoy about that?

SD: So, I really, really enjoy those aspects of rallying the team. I'm fairly new to this job, where I've got this project management—manager of the project management office, which sounds ridiculous but—. And before that I had been doing some—I was managing the introduction of a new engine line. Which is an amazing experience and all that, and a great growth opportunity for me. But it was also one of these where you are the point person for the whole product and you're reaching out to operations and purchasing and logistics and marketing. And so you don't have anybody working for you. So your team is huge because you've got whole organizations that are working on these things.

And so it's a lot—you don't have that personal aspect of saying, "This is my group." You know, "I'm going to make sure this is okay. I'm going to make sure that Troy's working on this, and she's had some growth opportunities over the last five years but you know what, it's time for Troy to go out into another area." And you know, "And I'll work to try to find that area, make sure it's the right area." And that, "No, no, this is good leadership," and you know, "You can do it." That sort of thing. I didn't get that with the other job. And so I really, I missed that. I genuinely missed that. And so I loved being a leader, but one of the things I really enjoyed about being a leader is kind of pulling that group together and rallying them and saying, "Let's go get it, this is a really tough goal but I think we can get there."

TE: Okay. What skills do you think young women who are entering engineering—what skills do you think they need, or how can they prepare to develop their skills to move up in the profession?

SD: Mm-hmm. So, some of it is about communication. So, women—part of it, it's hard not to generalize, but you know—so women a lot of times are better team players and better managers, you know, rallying a team, so to speak. And I think parts of it are, just because we're good in that area doesn't mean you can't be direct, doesn't mean you can't still be forceful. So don't kind of let all those soft skills kind of overwhelm a person as a leader or as an engineer. And sometimes we focus a lot of it on leadership, but as an engineer a lot of times you're sought after because of your expertise in something, so some of the things that we reference in leadership training can apply to someone as an engineer. I'd say have confidence in yourself.

I sat, probably 5 or 6 years ago, in some presentations of some interns at the end of the intern presentation, and both of them were good candidates. One was a man, one was a woman. The woman got up there and she was like "Oh, you know, you guys really should have done this and I can't believe you don't talk together and this group doesn't know what that's doing," and you know just like, "You guys this and you guys that and I can't believe this." Just almost very like—"And I couldn't say anything because I was just an intern." And you know, it's almost like really knowing she was an intern and kind of putting herself lower on the totem pole because of that. And the guy gets up there, and you wouldn't have

known—he could have been working for ten years. He's just like, "Here's what I did with the results, and I thought we should do this so I went out and bought these different kind of pellets that we could try and then did some testing," and, you know, very confident.

And so I really do think that a lot of times a woman will be, inside, just as confident as a guy, but the guy will fake it and you won't know. So I just, like, for example with an intern or a co-op, I always say don't go in—or with a new engineer, do not go in and say, "Well, I'm just doing the job. Well, I'm brand new. Well, I'm this—." You know it's just—everybody knows that. You don't need to temper everything with it, and so I think we kind of belittle—not belittle, but we tend to point out these things too much. And it's like, just get on with it.

TE: What do you see in your professional future?

SD: So—.(laughter) So, I would like to—I aspire to be a product manager at Caterpillar. So, a product manager at Caterpillar is somebody that's got the bottom line product responsibility. So, where I've been the past couple years is on the new product introduction side. So product development, where we've got this need, we're bringing some new things to market, and so you've got all these different pieces. And so a product manager has all those pieces, but he's got the current production piece of it as well as this new piece. So I kind of see it as a nice progression from where I am. It would also get me some profit and loss statement experience which I don't have right now, which I think is a nice next progression for me. And, you know, whether or not I get there or not is kind of in

the cards. I have a few years left to go so I'm hoping to see that come, but we'll see.

TE: Okay. What do you hope that new women engineers will get from SWE?

SD: I hope that they will get affirmation that they are doing the right thing. And, you know, whether or not they're in a company that has a lot of women, or whether or not they're in areas where there's no women, or they're the only engineer in sight or whatever it is—that, you know, if they're doing what they like that, you know, who cares what anybody else says? And I think that's the key thing, is to do what they like. And, you know, you listen to my story and I went into it because I liked math and science and, you know, maybe engineering wouldn't have been the right thing for me. It's ended up it's a wonderful career for me, but had I gone through that path—you know, don't just stay there because your dad thinks you should be an engineer or something. Try to figure out what you want to do and go for it, and who cares what everybody else says? Because there's certainly a place for lots more women in the work place. And so just kind of hang in there and use SWE as that sounding board in case you're getting all that pushback or, "Why the heck are you here?" Or, you know, some of the comments that you wouldn't think would still be going on.

TE: Okay. And how do you think that SWE can achieve that? What can SWE do to enhance that?

SD: Right. So we always—we're sitting here at the national conference and we think, "If everybody'd come here this would be great." And you know we're never going

get to that point where all the women engineers come to the Society conference. But I think what we do is to take this opportunity, spread it out to the other parts of the country. I really do think that there's a large piece of reaching out one at a time. So, you know, we talk about—there's always all this talk about mentors and all this kind of stuff and, you know, "Oh, we can sign people up with mentors and everything." I have never had a mentor from somebody that I just was matched up with. I mean, usually it's reaching out to somebody that you connect with. And if we do that—and one at a time it sounds like a slow way to do it. But when you start magnifying the SWE members and knowing how this can help and just, "Yeah, you're doing the right thing, hang in there." You know, not being afraid to talk about you're—you know, so here I am now. I've been in the work force for over 20 years, you know. Just talk about my journey. And, you know, some of it's boring or not exciting but then kind of where I find my place and have moved on. Just let people know that that happens and it's okay. And if you're there that's okay, but if you like what you're doing, or maybe aspire—you like what you see your boss doing then stay with it and you can get there.

TE: Okay. Is there anything else you would like to add before we end?

SD: No, I don't think so.

TE: Okay, well, I thank you very much for doing this interview. The interview is now over.

END OF INTERVIEW