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You hold a Bachelor of Science degree in mechanical engineering and materials science from Duke University. Who or what inspired you to explore this industry and what advice do you have for our student attendees who are interested in pursuing careers in the energy industry?

I have always been a problem-solver. I like to understand what makes things work, and more particularly what happens when they don't – and why. Pursuing a degree in engineering provided an ideal platform for learning and applying theory to achieve practical results. Although I had no direct experience with anyone in the engineering field, my parents, with backgrounds in mathematics and nursing, were very supportive and helped confirm that this pursuit would likely open up a multitude of career opportunities. Upon graduation, several opportunities presented themselves including positions in manufacturing, spanning the pharmaceutical, pulp and paper, and chemical industries, management consulting, and the energy business. Every choice held its own intrigue, however the energy position – an Applications Engineer for a small energy company focused on co-generation technology – provided the greatest opportunity for learning and development. Ironically, the energy space was not at the top of my list as I started considering my options and engaging in job interviews. Once I had concrete positions to assess and compare, I realized that the energy industry presented a much more complex and multi-faceted business opportunity, particularly given the changes in the electric utility segment occurring at that time.

My advice to students interested in pursuing careers in the energy industry – and more particularly for those who are not interested: take the time to purposefully seek out and explore opportunities in the energy space to better understand the breadth and reach of our industry. Energy is essential to achieving and sustaining a high quality of life. Many of us across the globe have ready access to it every day, and some are still striving for this access. The beauty of our industry is that whether we are trying to solve the problem of bringing the first light into someone's home or continually developing more reliable, efficient, affordable, and sustainable sources of energy, we engage and provide opportunities for people with diverse backgrounds, educational achievements, perspectives and experiences.

What initiatives do you focus on to continue empowering women to rise in the ranks of leadership within Seminole Electric Cooperative and the energy industry in general?

In my experience, one of the most powerful things I can do to empower other women to seek leadership positions in our industry, and ultimately achieve them, is to be their role model. As I pursued my engineering degree and then

continued on to pursue my career, very few women occupied the positions I held much less the positions I might aspire to. Fortunately, I did not find this to be a deterrent, but rather a motivator to work hard, gain experience, and be open to opportunities. I am also thankful for the many mentors, both men and women, I had along the way. Part of being a role model includes committing time and effort to being visible and available. I commit a large part of my time each year to engaging with employees – both scheduled and ad hoc – as well as our Member Distribution Cooperative Boards and staff. I also accept a number of opportunities to participate in and/or speak at industry and community events, particularly those like Florida’s Women in Energy Leadership Forum, which highlight women in our industry, as well as participate on external Boards linked to our industry. Another part of being a role model is to seek out, support, and encourage women in our business to step up to their next level. This also comes in many forms including hiring and promoting actions, encouraging involvement in cross-functional teams and business initiatives (both internal and external) to broaden experience, supporting and coaching during the recruitment process, and providing a sounding-board for others as they explore opportunities and navigate at the next level.

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Prior to entering this role in 2013 you served as Senior Vice President and Chief Operating Officer of Old Dominion Electric Cooperative in Virginia. In your experience, how are co-ops serving as a champions of renewable energy across different states and in Florida?

Electric cooperatives have been, and continue to be, focused on delivering safe, reliable, affordable power to our consumer-members and empowering the communities we serve through our not-for-profit business model. A key part of providing this service is building and sustaining strong and trusted relationships with our cooperative members. Cooperatives have been champions of renewable energy as well as other technology innovations because these initiatives provide value to our consumer-members and solve unique challenges. For context, roughly 900 cooperatives power 56% of the nation’s landmass, own and maintain 42% of U.S. electric distribution lines, power over 20 million businesses, homes, schools and farms in 47 states, and in total serve 42 million people across 88% of U.S. counties. Since 2010, co-op renewable energy capacity has more than doubled from 4 gigawatts to 9.7 gigawatts – a 145% increase. More than 90 percent of electric co-ops provide electricity generated by renewable energy resources. As for solar, total solar energy capacity at electric cooperatives is more than four times what it was in 2015, capable of generating more than 940 megawatts of electricity. Here in Florida, Seminole has included renewable energy resources as part of our power supply portfolio since 2000. We added solar to the portfolio with our first cooperative solar project in Hardee County in 2017. Since then we have committed to an additional utility-scale solar project to be in commercial operation in 2021, and are currently evaluating proposals for a third tranche of solar resources beyond 2021.

What are some exciting things developing and on the horizon in the utilities industry that may create opportunities for the next generation of workforce talent?

There are so many exciting things that have developed over the last several years and are on the horizon in our industry. I think back to when I joined this industry over 30 years ago and the structural changes that were taking place then. Many of those changes initiated an evolutionary path for the energy business and particularly the electric utility segment that has continued through today and will continue as we move into the future. This structural evolution facilitated even broader opportunities for our workforce to explore in power generation, transmission, and distribution operations, engineering and development as well as commodities management, logistics, environmental performance, consumer and employee engagement, finance and accounting, regulatory and legal compliance, energy policy, and the list goes on. The future is so exciting because all these opportunities will continue while new technology development and application, and increasing consumer needs and demands will drive innovation and

integration at an even faster pace. Again, energy is essential to achieving and sustaining a high quality of life. Our industry is complex and challenging. We match supply and demand for electricity in real time, every hour, every day, all year long, utilizing a sophisticated network of interconnected resources to deliver safe, reliable and affordable service that empowers our communities. While we keenly focus on the day-to-day business requirements, we are also looking ahead, planning and readying our businesses to implement strategies for the future. And when the unexpected happens, like our recent hurricanes here in Florida, this industry comes together to provide mutual aid and assistance better than any I've seen or experienced, to restore service and bring communities back to life. Who wouldn't want to be a part of this industry?

The annual Florida's Women in Energy Leadership Forum aims to promote opportunities in the energy industry by recognizing the success that women leaders in the industry have demonstrated in growing Florida's economy and diversifying an already tremendous workforce.