



CHAMPION IN ENERGY

November 2019

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Your distinguished career has multiple examples of places where you have advanced and championed the energy industry. What inspired you to begin a career in this industry?

I have always been inspired to make people's lives better. In high school, I was interested in medicine and ultimately graduated with a master's degree in biomedical engineering. But, after getting married in graduate school, I needed to find a job in Birmingham. I was hired, thankfully, by Southern Company. I immediately discovered that my passion for making people's lives better was completely fulfilled because, of course, by delivering power and comfort to customers and communities, everyone's lives are better!

From your experience, what has been the biggest challenge you have faced or lesson you have learned?

The biggest lesson for me started the day I began working for Southern Company. I had a pretty narrow view of what I wanted to do with my life (laser focused on biomedical engineering). Once I started working in the utility industry, I realized that there was a big beautiful world out there that was exciting and fulfilling, and that I needed to be open to new opportunities as they arose. So, when new opportunities came my way at Southern Company – even though I may not have had the background – I took them! I moved from engineering to finance to a trading floor and so on. And with every new part of the business, I continued to be fascinated, challenged, and grow. It's been a wonderful journey.

"We must foster a culture where everyone feels valued and respected"

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.

With the sale of Gulf Power and Florida City Gas, where/what are the remaining investments by Southern Company in Florida?

Southern Company Gas, through its Pivotal LNG subsidiary, is a major player in LNG supply infrastructure development. In addition to owning and operating an LNG plant near Birmingham, Ala., it operates a fleet of tankers that deliver LNG to customers throughout the Southeast, including Florida, using its network of Pivotal LNG and Southern Company Gas utility-owned peak shaving and production facilities. Through a joint-venture between Pivotal LNG and NorthStar Midstream, a subsidiary of OakTree Capital Management, Pivotal LNG has completed construction of the JAX LNG facility at Dames Point near the port of Jacksonville, Fla. The facility went into service September 2018. It's the first facility in the U.S. to deliver LNG into a bunkering vessel, and the first small scale waterside LNG production facility. Florida Natural Gas also serves thousands of residential and commercial customers in Florida – primarily in Miami, Orlando, Tampa and Jacksonville – as part of SouthStar Energy Services.

STEM education provides a path to increase science literacy for the next generation of innovators. What advice would you give a student considering a STEM occupation and how can we collectively better market this type of education?

My advice would be, as Nike says, "Just Do It!". If America is going to continue to compete on a global stage, we must develop 21st century problem solvers. As you point out, science and math education drive our nation's capacity to innovate. More than 2 million job openings requiring a degree in a STEM field were projected to go unfilled last year according to one study. YIKES! I think that students today want to make a difference in the world – economically and environmentally. We must do a better job of making sure that students considering STEM recognize that there's no better place to make a difference than in a STEM field. I'm afraid we (the collective STEM industries) have allowed our field to look stodgy and boring. It's NOT, but we definitely have to do a better job communicating the exciting things happening in our fields

What are some exciting things on the horizon for Southern Company Gas that may create new opportunities for the next workforce generation?

I think a key area of opportunity that is already gaining traction is environmental sustainability. Our industry's ability to adapt, respond and grow in the face of change is essential to our charge to creating a cleaner energy future. We are committed to lead that change as we imagine new possibilities and opportunities while continuing to serve our customers with clean, safe, reliable and affordable energy. It's a fact that natural gas has played a key role in achieving significant carbon reductions in the U.S. – and it will continue to do so as we move to lower emissions further. Natural gas is the foundation fuel that has led to a cleaner energy mix. Because of our role in that future, there will be new opportunities. The new workforce generation will be able to offer a unique perspective on how we can innovate to evolve our services, products and regulatory structures to support this effort

What do you wish people really understood about the importance of diversity and inclusion?

That it's a requirement, not a request. We must foster a culture where everyone feels valued and respected – a culture that has the bandwidth to imagine new ways of bettering our future. It will take all of us working together. And, we must be intentional with our efforts. We're doing that here at Southern Company Gas. It's part of our DNA.