



# The Power Source

## Igniting the Future of Florida



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### Power Profile: LaQuitta Ghent

Vice President, Customer Delivery Region Support  
Duke Energy, Florida

**LaQuitta, your position with Duke Energy Florida is one of leadership in engineering. Would you provide a brief synopsis of your career path leading to this professional mark?**

I am currently Vice President of Region Support for Duke Energy Florida. Region Support is responsible for 7 Departments (Contractor Management, Safety, Workforce Development, Emergency Preparedness, Process & Productivity, GIS, and Major Projects). The team consists of over 200 employees that focus on event-free operations and powering the lives of our customers and the vitality of our communities. My team of dedicated professionals serves an area that spans across 35 counties and contains over 1.8 M retail customers. I earned my Bachelor of Science in Electrical Engineering from Florida State University. Upon graduation, I accepted a position as an engineer designer with Florida Power & Light in South Florida. In 2006 I had an opportunity to return to my Central Florida roots, and joined Duke Energy (formerly Progress Energy) as an engineering designer for large residential subdivisions in the greater Orlando area. During my career I have had several leadership positions of increasing accountability throughout Distribution including engineering, power quality, reliability, and lighting programs.

**What inspired you to join the energy industry?**

While in college, I had the opportunity to have several summer internships that helped to steer me toward the energy industry. I love that throughout my career I combined my technical expertise, with my passion for customer interaction. I also quickly realized that the world revolves around the ability to have electricity (energy). So, I ultimately, saw job/career security.

**We have repeatedly heard that female students entering the engineering field is on a decline. What do you attribute that to and what do you want to share with young students today about the opportunities in the industry?**

The key is exposure! Many times, students gravitate to what they see. Female students need to see women like myself and others in the energy industry and expose them to the variety of careers that can be held in the energy industry.



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**You are very active in the American Association of Blacks in Energy (AABE) Florida. Out of your work with youth and AABE Florida, you have been an extraordinary champion for the Power Academy. Can you share with us how the initiative started and the results that you see?**

As a part of Duke Energy's Diversity and Inclusion vision to attract and retain a diverse workforce that reflects the communities we serve, the American Association of Blacks in Energy -Florida (AABE-FL) and Advocates for African Americans Duke Energy FL Chapter A3-FL (Employee Network Group at Duke Energy) collaborated to introduce and expose the minority students to professional and craft/technical careers in the utility industry. The Youth Energy Academy has helped to expose students to the energy industry.

**What are the challenges and opportunities in working in/with a male-dominated segment of the industry? And with your supervisory role?**

There are pervasive stereotypes that you must work through as a woman in a male dominated industry (i.e. caring mother, office housekeeper, etc.). It is all how you deal with it. You should always play to your strengths, but always advise of comments or actions that make you feel uncomfortable. You should ensure your colleagues know that your voice should be heard, and you should be at the table and do so unapologetically.

**You are an active participant in the Florida's Women in Energy Leadership Forum and Duke has been one of the core company sponsors. Your company president, Catherine Stempien, is a leader in your industry in communications, diversity, and was vocal in supporting the recognition of "Black Lives Matter." Do these actions help with recruiting, morale, and loyalty to your corporation? More specifically, what has this meant to you?**

Most certainly this helps with recruiting, morale, and loyalty to Duke Energy. For me it demonstrates the culture that we are striving to achieve at Duke Energy. Having an inclusive environment is vital not only to the employees at Duke Energy, but the communities we serve. As stated above when our communities see employees that look like them, they will be more inclined to apply for positions.