

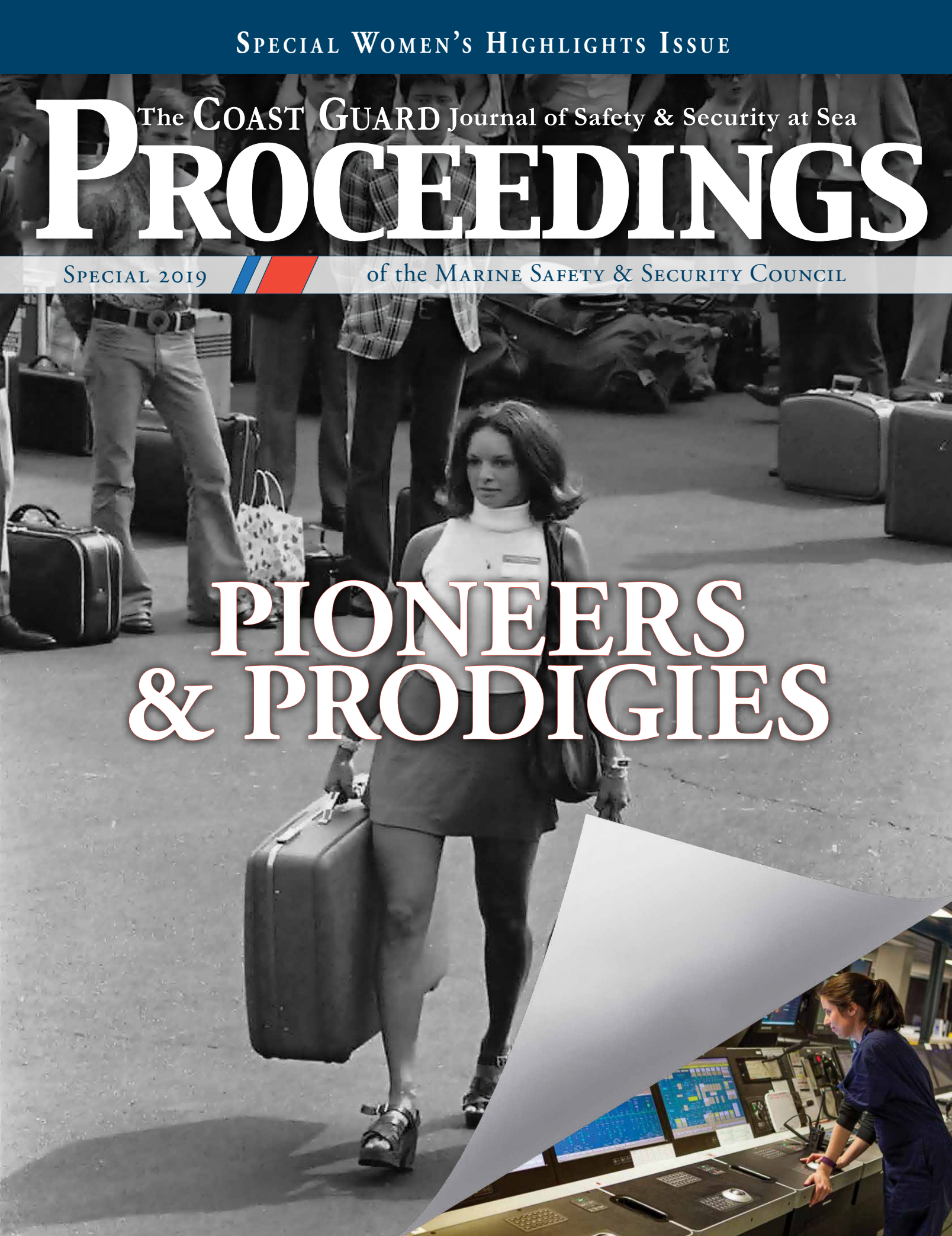
SPECIAL WOMEN'S HIGHLIGHTS ISSUE


The COAST GUARD Journal of Safety & Security at Sea  
**PROCEEDINGS**

SPECIAL 2019

of the MARINE SAFETY & SECURITY COUNCIL

**PIONEERS  
& PRODIGIES**





Established in 1716, the U.S. Lighthouse Service and its lighthouse keepers shouldered the responsibility of keeping the waters safe for mariners. Any Coastie would tell you was the most famous keeper was Ida Lewis. Born on February 25, 1842, she began helping her parents tend the Lime Rock Light in Rhode Island when she was 15, and is credited with saving 18 lives. The U.S. Lighthouse Service consolidated with the U.S. Coast Guard in 1939. From the Coast Guard collection

*Like the U.S. Coast Guard, the U.S. maritime community would not be what it is today without the strength of women who continue to make history and lead it into the 21st Century. It's important to recognize that their contributions have given the U.S. one of the most diverse maritime communities in the world. But there is more to be done, and we must continue to encourage women to join the maritime community to increase the diversity and overall effectiveness of our workforce. The perspective and skills of women in the U.S. maritime community continue to support a vibrant and effective industry that best serves our country. Our maritime community and national security will be stronger from their contributions and leadership.*

—Admiral Karl L. Schultz  
Commandant, United States Coast Guard

*Our World Maritime theme for this year is "Empowering Women in the Maritime Community." Improving the participation of women in society leads to better social and economic outcomes. This is also true in the maritime community. So, it is critical that women are provided with equal access to opportunities at all levels and within all sectors of the maritime industry. Experience shows that, when they are given those opportunities, women are strong and successful—continually challenging old-fashioned and outdated perceptions and proving that, today, the maritime industries are for everyone. It's not about your gender, it's about what you can do.*

—Secretary General Kitack Lim,  
International Maritime Organization





# PROCEEDINGS

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**ON THE COVER:**

*In the black and white photo, Nancy Wagner walks into the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy in the summer of 1974, along with 14 other women, as part of the first class of women at a military academy in the United States.*

*The image is peeled back to reveal an image of Ally Cedenno standing at the console of a highly automated ultradeepwater drill ship nearly 45 years later. Ally is highlighted her for her work in founding the organization Women Offshore, a mentoring network for women.*

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## **Champion's Point of View**

JEFFREY G. LANTZ  
*Director, Commercial Regulations and Standards  
U.S. Coast Guard*

Hello Friends and Colleagues,

It is with great pleasure that we present this special edition of Proceedings which features the contributions of women in the U.S. maritime.

The International Maritime Organization selected “Empowering Women in the Maritime Community” as the 2019 World Maritime Day theme. In doing so, the IMO not only justifiably calls attention to and highlights the contributions of women in the maritime sector, but also reminds us that the journey of inclusivity and diversity is not complete. While there has been progress, it’s fair to say there is further to go. For the maritime industry to continue meeting the increasing needs of our world community, it must take advantage of all the talent and capability embodied within the entirety of our diverse population.

With this in mind, we thought it appropriate to highlight women in the U.S. maritime, their contributions and accomplishments. We did this not only to show what they individually achieved, but also to inspire other women—and men—to consider the opportunities the dynamic maritime industry provides as a career choice. We tried to highlight women from different segments including mariners, managers, government leaders, and industry representatives to demonstrate the breadth of their significant influence. While this issue highlights well-deserved recognition for the women included, I know there are many others deserving of recognition we weren’t able to include. They are working hard and doing their job, not for recognition, but to make our maritime industry better and stronger, and we are grateful for the contributions they make every day.

This has been one of the most gratifying Proceedings issues that I, and my staff, have had the privilege of putting together. A big thank you goes to everyone who contributed, including the industry partners who helped identify the women highlighted in the issue, those who gathered information and wrote the articles, and especially the women highlighted for consenting to let us include them in the issue. A special thanks goes to Lieutenant Commander Staci Weist. It was her vision and hard work that made it a reality.

Please join with us in celebrating the many accomplishments of women in the U.S. maritime industry as we look forward to many more in the future.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "JG Lantz".



BREAKING BARRIERS:  
WOMEN SERVING IN THE MARITIME





# U.S. Merchant Marine Academy

## Plotting a New Course

compiled from AMERICAN MERCHANT MARINE MUSEUM DOCUMENTS

**T**he United States Merchant Marine Academy at Kings Point (USMMA) had entered uncharted waters when 15 women reported for INDOC in 1974. That was the first year the academy enrolled women into its rigorous four-year program. They came from across the country to prove sailing the seas was fair game for all. Eight women from that initial class graduated and went on to successful maritime careers.

It wasn't always smooth sailing for USMMA's first class of women, though. They were, effectively, Guinea

pigs. From haircuts, uniforms and PT, to curriculum and sleeping quarters, academy administrators grappled with how to integrate women in to what had always been an all-male student body.

All of the hubbub was the result of Title IX of the Equal Rights Education Amendments Act, which Congress passed in 1972. The act states that no educational institution receiving federal funds can discriminate against students or applicants based on their gender.



Two female midshipmen look on as they prepare for a regimental drill exercise. (Opposite page) Various photos of the first 4 years of women at U.S. Merchant Marine Academy taken from yearbooks and Academy archives. Photos courtesy of the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy



### Education Amendments Act

Arthur B. Engle, USMMA's superintendent at the time, was determined to adhere to the new law and, in fact, was proud that his service academy was the first to welcome women. Unfortunately, the mandate to accept women didn't come with any guidelines on how to weave them into the fabric of the academy community. That was left to trial and error, which made for some stories the graduates now laugh about.

Just 17 at the time, Frances Yates had crossed the country on her own to report for INDOC, a rigorous two-week training period to indoctrinate plebe candidates into USMMA life. While waiting in line for room assignments she noted her new roommate's name: Peter Ziegler.

"My first thought was, wow! This place is progressive!" she said. "But then I realized there must have been a mistake."

It seems the academy's clerical staff had confused the female and male spelling of her name. The error was quickly corrected and she was matched with a new, female roommate.

The quandaries continued with uniforms. It was assumed the academy tailors could appropriately alter the men's uniforms to fit the female physique. While technically that was the case, in reality it wasn't terribly successful and made for some interesting looks. For instance, reducing the waistbands of the shorts worn for INDOC left very little space between back the pockets. In other cases there was only so much the tailors could

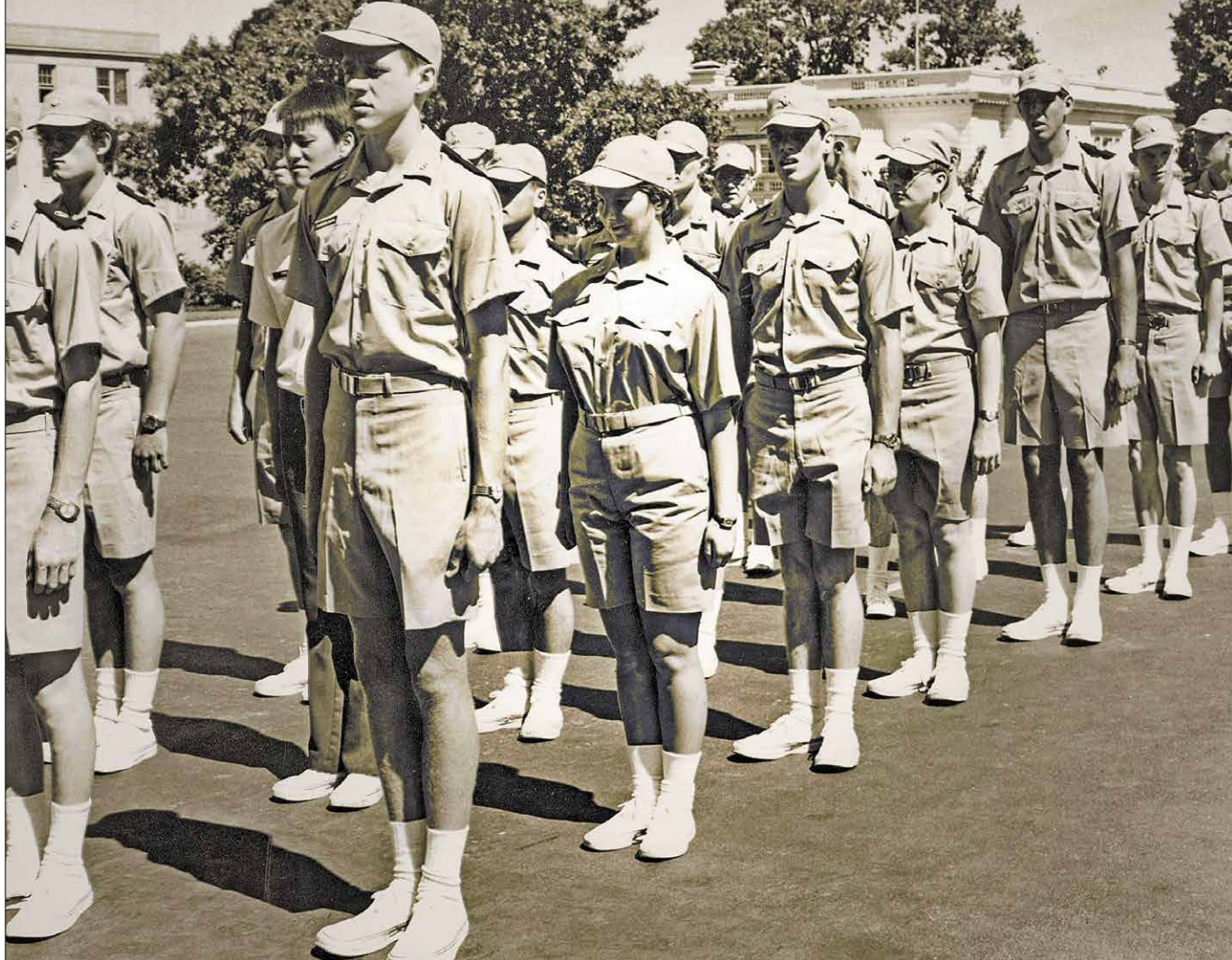
*No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.*

—Title IX, Equal Rights Education Amendments Act

do. "It is impossible to keep a straight gig line when your uniform swallows your whole frame," Kathy Metcalf said. A gig line is created by aligning shirt buttons, trouser fly, and belt buckle. Keeping that line straight is critical to proper wear of the uniform.

Another critical component, and stumbling block for USMMA in 1974: The haircut.





A single woman graces the ranks of a group of Midshipmen in formation. Photo courtesy of the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy

How should women wear their hair to be in compliance with appearance regulations? Superintendent Engler decided the women should be treated equally and the academy barbers were used to the traditional buzz cut, so initially the women didn't have to worry about styling their hair for awhile.

"I was sad," Yates said. "I'm sure I cried, but what was I going to do? The hair was already gone and I knew it would grow back."

Realizing what a traumatic experience this had been for the women, the academy began warning incoming women about the new style awaiting them. Yates said that hair continued to vex her throughout her academy years, despite finding new, fun ways to tie and pin it up.

"I collected quite a few demerits over the years and my hair being too long was a pretty regular item that incurred demerits," she said.

While the curriculum proved to be a one-size-fits-all, men and women took the exact same classes, the women put their collective foot down when the academy tried to go easy on them during physical training. While some differences were maintained, the women were insistent that they train as vigorously as the men.

*I was sad. I'm sure I cried, but what was I going to do? The hair was already gone and I knew it would grow back.*

— Frances Yates

They also volunteered for the men's physical program when allowed.

Kings Point alumnae Kathy Metcalf played co-ed rugby with the men, who welcomed the women to their teams. She said the guys did tend to go a little easier on them, but she still took some hits. "In fact, the hardest I was ever hit was by a woman!" she said.

There were also numerous clubs and sports in which the women could participate, including sailing, crew, and cheerleading, as well as bicycle club and honor guard. For Nancy Wagner, being on the water was her



happy place, and her time on the varsity sailing team helped alleviate the stress of coursework and the relative isolation.

“You had very little exposure to the outside world, especially during your first year at the academy,” Wagner said. “The waterfront was a place to escape academy life stress. I not only loved sailing with my team, but also was relieved looking at the academy from the water.

“Sailing was my savior.”

She got a lot of time to do just that when the first class of women Kings Pointers embarked on Sea Year. This year, when midshipmen serve as cadets aboard U.S.-flagged merchant vessels, is part of the fabric of Kings Point. While Sea Year is challenging for everyone, the women encountered a few unique challenges. Not only were they the first women to enter Kings Point, they were some of the first to work on U.S.-flagged ships, especially among the licensed officers in the deck and engine departments of commercial vessels.



Various photos of the first 4 years of women at U.S. Merchant Marine Academy taken from yearbooks and the Academy archives. Photos courtesy of the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy





# IT HAPPENED ON LONG ISLAND

A DAILY PROMOTIONAL FEATURE PRODUCED BY THE NEWSDAY MARKETING DEPARTMENT.



Photo: Newsday

## 1974: First Female Cadets Enroll at Merchant Marine Academy *900CV*

While the Merchant Marine Academy at Kings Point opened in 1943, it wasn't until thirty-one years later that it admitted women. On August 31, 1974, fourteen female cadet members of the Class of 1978 arrived on campus, following two weeks of indoctrination and a month of general training. One of the Academy's first women graduates, Nancy L. Wagner, went on to achieve another "first." In 1990, Captain Wagner joined the San Francisco Bay Bar Pilots Association and became the organization's first female pilot. Wagner's arrival at the Merchant Marine Academy in 1974 is shown here.

—Cynthia Blair

TOMORROW: 3,450-POUND GREAT WHITE SHARK CAUGHT

While they realized they might face sexist comments, and possibly sexual harassment, they knew this was the only way to move ahead in their careers as licensed U.S. Merchant Marine officers. "Acta Non Verba," actions, not words. That is the spirit they carried with them as they entered this new environment, which included the men onboard making clumsy attempts to be helpful and the women being chastised for accepting the help. It included veiled threats to their safety and some captains flatly refusing to go to sea with a woman onboard. The latter caused more than one woman to nearly miss her departure.

All eight of women remaining from the initial 15 found success during Sea Year, serving on a variety of vessels, including some that were twice as old as the cadets and some far newer. While one cadet sailed with Military Sealift Command, most sailed on tankers or research vessels, all of which were steam vessels, though Ivy Barton, the Class of 1978's sole female engineering major, may have been the only one who cared.

Regardless of what ship they sailed on or how it was powered, their Sea Year experiences would become invaluable to those who came after them. USMMA established

forums on campus to answer questions and offer advice to women about to depart, including those that male sailors rarely had to consider. Some of this advice included not wearing perfume or jewelry and always insisting that co-workers knock before entering their quarters.

From Plebe Year through graduation, the first women to graduate from USMMA navigated the rough seas of a traditionally male-dominated learning environment and career field. Because they succeeded, they ensured the opportunity to sail as a U.S. Merchant Marine officer would be a reality for the hundreds of women who followed their example.

In the 45 years since the first 15 women reported to the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy for INDOC, things have changed a bit. USMMA understands that "equality" isn't synonymous with "identical," so women's uniforms are now designed for women, haircuts are not quite as traumatizing, and they don't get the same kind of looks Nancy Wagner did when she arrived on campus.

Though men still outnumber them at USMMA, women are mainstays on campus, ensuring the course charted in 1974 by the first 15 women continues to run true for those that will follow. //



A collection of nautical instruments including a sextant, a telescope, and a compass, resting on a wooden surface with a rope.

## MERCHANT MARINERS: DECK

*Women have already made a powerful and POSITIVE impact on the maritime industry. If you can think it, you CAN do it. If you have a vision, hold onto that and nothing will stand in the way of achieving it.*

—Rear Admiral Jack Buono  
Superintendent, U.S. Merchant Marine Academy





IN MEMORY OF ONE OF *EL FARO'S* 33

# Danielle Laura Randolph

Second Mate, *SS El Faro*

compiled by PROCEEDINGS STAFF

Growing up in coastal Maine, it is no wonder that Danielle Laura Randolph felt the tug of the tides. During the summers, when she wasn't working at a fishing consortium and marina in her hometown of Rockland, she was working on the docks in Port Clyde, just 30 minutes from home.

It did not take long before she had decided on a career path, telling her mother, Laurie Bobillot, that she was going to attend Maine Maritime Academy (MMA). Danielle was so sure of her decision that she never considered a backup school. She applied to the academy during her senior year at Rockland District High School, from which she graduated in 2000. In the fall of the same year, she joined the freshman class at the Maine Maritime Academy, graduating in 2004 with a bachelor's degree in marine transportation.

While she had found her male classmates supportive during her years at MMA, she would discover that would not always be the case, especially if she was the only woman onboard. She often was. During an early tour with TOTE Maritime, a chief mate's actions toward her cost

him his job. His termination allowed for the second and third mates to move up the ladder. It also allowed Danielle to become the third mate, but any celebration was tinged with talk among the crew about how she had gotten the job. Such scuttlebutt might have beaten a lesser woman, but her petite 5 feet belied the depth of her resolve. Determined to prove herself, she worked hard, kept a sense of humor, and obtained her second mate's license.

There's a rhythm to life at sea that can be comforting, but it also can eventually wear a person down. Danielle was at sea for 70 days and then home for an equal stretch. While at home, she spent as much time with family and friends as possible. She hosted theme parties, reveled in retro fashion, and enjoyed photography and being an "aunty" to her friend's children. This routine had played out for some 10 years when Danielle headed out on a routine run with 32 other crewmembers—including another woman—from Jacksonville, Florida, to San Juan, Puerto Rico, on September 30, 2015.

It was her usual route aboard her usual ship, the 40-year-old, 790-foot *El Faro*. This was to be *El Faro's* last



Danielle Randolph, 2004 Graduation Photo from Maine Maritime Academy. Photo courtesy of Maine Maritime Academy

*While she had found her male classmates supportive during her years at MMA, she would discover that would not always be the case, especially if she was the only woman onboard. She often was.*

—A close friend and fellow mariner, Maine Maritime Academy's Eight Bells page



run before a major retrofit. It was loaded with 25 million pounds of cargo, including 391 containers, 238 refrigerated containers, 118 trailers, 149 cars, and more than 600 long tons of fructose. There was one major difference between this run and others—Hurricane Joaquin.

What had been unpredictable Tropical Depression Eleven on September 28, had spun through Tropical Storm Joaquin and into Hurricane Joaquin in the space of only two days. Despite concerns expressed by the crew, the captain was confident that if they stuck to the normal course, they would be out of the storm's way in good time. By 1:30 a.m. on October 1, the storm and *El Faro*, which was just south of the Bahama's San Salvador Island, were on a collision course. Two hours later, the ship was being hit with sustained winds of 60-70 mile an winds—a category 3 storm.

About 5:13 p.m. on September 30, Randolph, relieved of her watch, fired off a quick email to her mother before getting some rest, "... Winds are super bad and seas are not great, love to everyone."

Back on watch at about 11:45 p.m., she plotted alternate waypoints and recommended a course change to the captain that may have kept the ship out of harm's way, a recommendation that was not taken. At 7 am the emergency center received a satellite call from Captain Michael Davidson on the *El Faro*. About 47 minutes later, the network of underwater microphones in the Atlantic Ocean transmitted the sound of something huge hitting the ocean floor near the Crooked Island in the Bahamas. It was *El Faro*, which, at the mercy of multiple system failures and sustained winds reaching 133 miles an hour, sank in 15,000 feet of water. The Coast Guard ended the search for crew members at sunset on October 7, 2015. All hands, including Danielle, were lost.



Photo courtesy of Laurie Bobillo

It is well-documented that Danielle Randolph was loved by many, but she was also a strong mariner, tried and true. On the Maine Maritime Academy's "Eight Bells" page one friend described her as "tough as nails with a pink manicure."

Fair winds and following seas, Danielle. //







DOING WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE

# Crystal Parker Maass

Chief Mate, Polar Tankers of Conoco Phillips

by AMY PARKER, PH.D.  
*U.S. Coast Guard*

Growing up in Maine, it was only natural for Crystal Parker Maass to develop a love of the outdoors. Hiking and camping are simply a way of life there, with many residents also enjoying time on the water. For Crystal, time spent with her grandmother along Maine's coast and enrollment in a community sailing program during high school laid the foundation for a career of firsts and a life of adventure.

Crystal enrolled at the Maine Maritime Academy (MMA) in 2002, as the first member of her family to seek a career in the maritime industry. She played basketball, soccer, and ran cross country while pursuing her degree. A consummate team player, she captained the women's basketball team to its first appearance in the NCAA tournament and was named to the North Atlantic Conference All-Academic Team from 2004-2006. In 2005, her leadership was further recognized when she became MMA's first female regimental commander. In 2006, she graduated valedictorian of her class with a Bachelor of Science degree in marine transportation and a minor in naval architecture.

She took full advantage of the time off between completing her degree and starting her professional career, by getting back to her roots and spending time outdoors. During this time, she accomplished a life-long goal of hiking the full length of the Appalachian Trail. Her outstanding preparation and quick pace meant she completed the nearly 2,200 mile hike in just five short months, a trek that takes many experienced hikers upward of seven months to complete. As with her other accomplishments, Crystal demonstrated strong perseverance and resolve.

Having conquered the Appalachian Trail, Crystal jumped right into her career with Polar Tankers, a wholly owned subsidiary of ConocoPhillips. She began sailing as a third mate on board a tanker, transporting crude oil from Alaska to refineries along the West Coast. Within eight years, she had moved up to second mate, and just three years later was promoted to her current status of chief mate. Along the way, she also earned her license and became certified as a first class pilot, Prince William Sound and Valdez Arm.

Crystal attributes much of her success to her desire to continually improve and a willingness to "do what needs to be done." Taking advantage of opportunities, leaning forward, and embracing challenges has resulted in a highly successful career with Polar Tankers that spans nearly 13 years. She has found the company, with its positive culture focused on safety, people, and the environment, to be a place where she and others can truly thrive. While the 60-day tours and long hours can be draining, she fully appreciates that her chosen career provides her with the opportunity to follow her passion for the outdoors.

Early in her tenure at Polar Tanker, Crystal found herself facing discouragement and frustration, feelings common to most new, young employees. A senior female employee provided key support that helped Crystal get through periods of self-doubt, particularly moments when she thought, "I cannot believe I am doing this." Not only did the senior member provide emotional support, she also identified growth opportunities and



A view only seen at sea, near Valdez, Alaska (Right). Photo courtesy of Crystal Parker Maass




constantly reminded Crystal to take the long view on work. The lesson the young mariner took to heart was to keep the overall goal in mind and not simply walk away when faced with a new challenge or tough situation. This informal mentor was able to provide invaluable knowledge and experience-based guidance.

Over the course of her career, Crystal has benefitted from working in an environment, and for a company, that is generally accepting and inclusive. The global shift toward increased acceptance of diversity is most pronounced with the younger industry members, whose response to seeing women in traditional male roles is something to the effect of, “Why wouldn’t they be there?” That said, she encourages everyone to become familiar with and learn to recognize Imposter Syndrome, to learn ways of coping with it so that it does not impact career and life choices. She also emphasizes the importance of seeking out sources of support, whether that be through official organizations like Women on the Water and Women Offshore, or through participation in conferences or other group activities. Creating or finding a group of individuals with shared experiences can make all the difference in establishing a successful, long-term career.

Many of Crystal’s experiences and lessons learned over the course of her career are likely familiar to anyone working in any male-dominated field. Hard work, planning, and perseverance contribute greatly to success, but recognizing the importance of having hard conversations related to performance, expectations, or other hot-button topics has been key for her. The only way to continuously improve is to have the courage to give and

receive honest feedback. This is true in the context of work, but even extends to the challenges of family life.

Balancing family life with professional responsibilities has always been a challenge for those who spend significant time away from home, Crystal included. Continuously evolving technology provides opportunities for more frequent communication while at sea, but it is still imperative for all parties to be on the same page. For Crystal, having open dialogue with her wife and ensuring that family comes first during her weeks at home helps create a balance between her career and family life. Like many members of her generation, Crystal’s wife, Emily, also has a full-time job outside the home. It takes concerted effort to find balance between the very different careers of seafarer and lawyer, but their friends and family routinely note that the couple makes it look easy. By establishing clear lines of communication and ensuring they have shared priorities, they have created a very happy home for themselves and their two small children.

In general, Crystal believes the maritime industry provides excellent opportunities for financial independence, adventure, growth, and development. She notes that this is true for those involved in all aspects of the industry, whether at sea or ashore, and that the skills necessary to find success in the maritime industry map exceptionally well to other aspects of life. She encourages anyone interested in pursuing a career in the industry to investigate all available options, continue to push ahead through the inevitable challenges, and simply “do what needs to be done.” 

*The global shift toward increased acceptance of diversity is most pronounced with the younger industry members, whose response to seeing women in traditional male roles is something to the effect of, “Why wouldn’t they be there?”*





## LISTENING IS THE KEY TO LEADERSHIP

# Lillian M. Gallo

Master, MV *President FD Roosevelt*

by LT STEPHANIE WASHINGTON  
U.S. Coast Guard

**G**ROWING up sailing off of Long Island, New York, Lilly Gallo loved being on the water, but was not set on attending a maritime school. It was her fascination with the weather that led to her exploration of meteorology programs, but it was the small feel and unique curriculum that drew her to SUNY Maritime (Fort Schuyler).

Maritime schools offer a distinctive hands-on curriculum, requiring cadets to complete a certain number

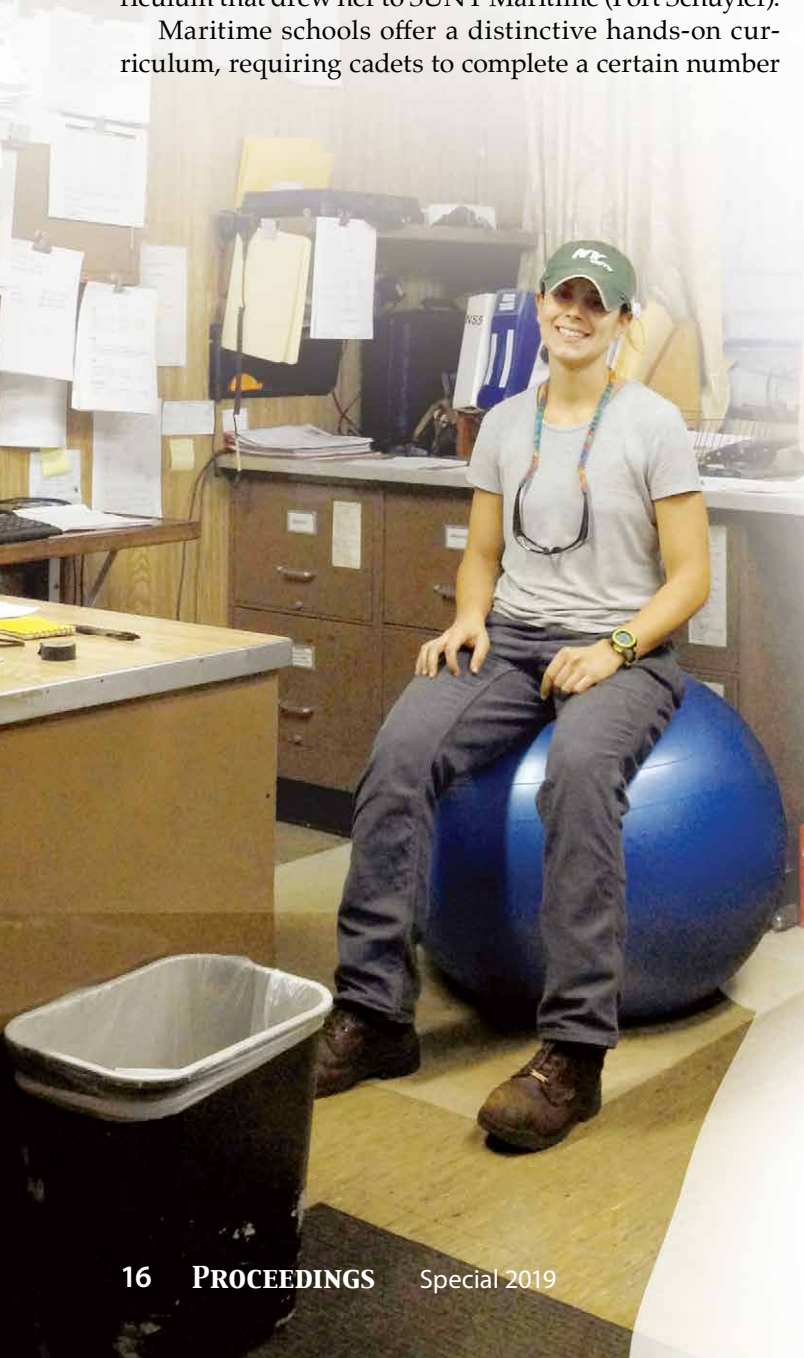
of days at sea in order to graduate and sit for a merchant mariner credential. Lilly chose the deck route and sat for her third mate's license upon graduation, which presented its own challenges, including additional credit hours, essentially resulting in attending school year round. She completed her first summer on the school training ship before exploring several types of vessels including a National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) research vessel, the *Ronald H. Brown* and the *SS El Morro*, a steam ship container roll-on, roll-off that supplied cargo to Puerto Rico. That experience caused her to pursue a career sailing deep sea.

Initially, she thought she would sail for several years and then pursue a graduate degree in meteorology. Taking advice from her peers, she joined the union under International Organization of Masters, Mates, and Pilots and got her first third mate gig within the month. As she promoted her license to second mate, she quickly realized that she liked being busy on the ship and wanted to continue to expand her license. After a quick four years, she landed her first chief mate job in 2013. Two years later, she was sailing as a permanent chief mate with APL, and has been working with them ever since.

Lilly credits SUNY Maritime with the opportunities she's had throughout her career. She constantly uses her hands-on training including her meteorology degree, which she uses to review weather during a run to decide if re-routing is necessary. Typhoons and north Pacific storms have kept her on her toes, but the thought of sitting in an office reviewing meteorological data has made her appreciate her career choice.

By the time she became a chief mate, her passion for sailing was evident and she wanted to continue her deep sea career. In 2017, she received her master's license and in September 2018, she sailed her first trip as a master onboard the M/V *President Roosevelt*. It was with this hitch that she became the first female captain to sail with APL/MAERSK. She is currently sailing as chief mate and relief master onboard different vessels for APL.

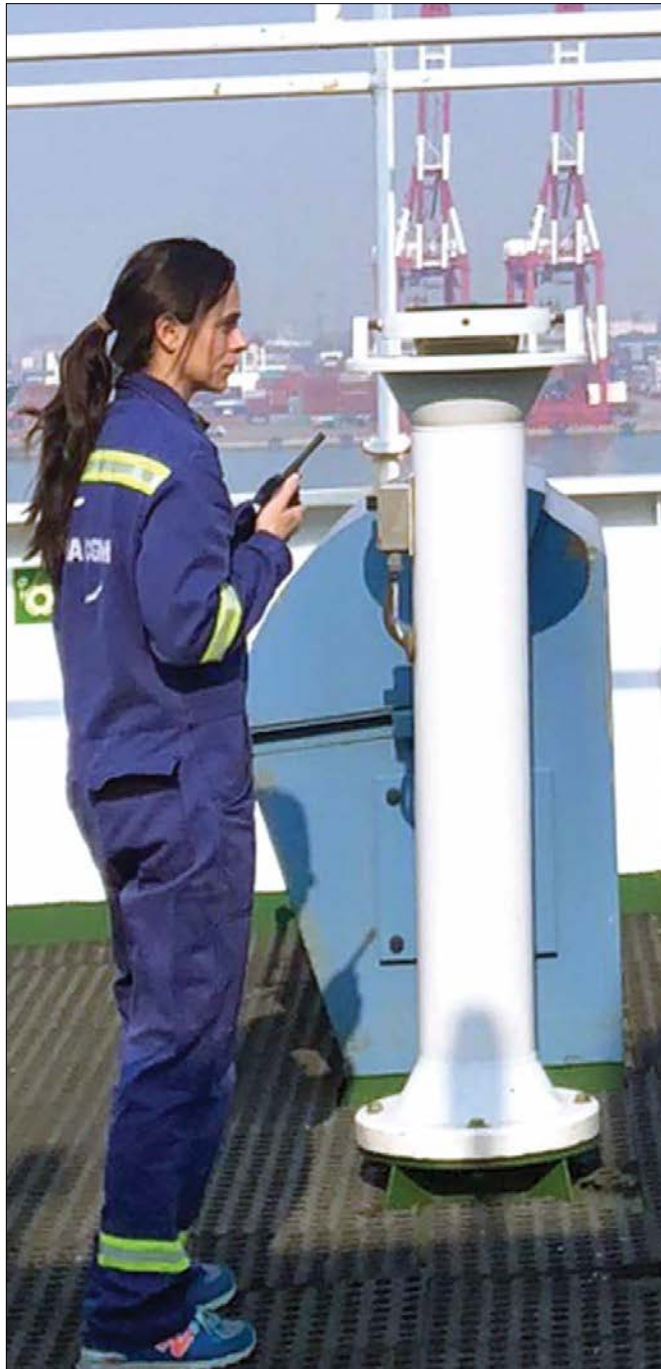
As if being a female officer didn't already put her in the minority, she is the second youngest person of the crew she currently captains. Having a strong





*If you maintain an even keel, your vessel will reach its destination more quickly.*

—Lillian M. Gallo



Captain Lillian Gallo directs her crew from the bridge wing. Photos courtesy of Lillian Gallo



female mariner community to reach out to has helped her maintain her confidence. She is a firm believer that everyone is equal onboard the ship, and stepping onto a vessel with that mindset has allowed her to focus

on her job. She has also found that mindset to be contagious as she has progressed into leadership roles. Assuming you will be treated differently for being a female is not a positive way to join a vessel, but she has remained confident in her abilities and training. To Lilly, the most important leadership quality is the ability to listen. Everyone has valuable input and unique experiences that can shed light on new situations. If people feel valued in the decision making process, they are more empowered to contribute, which results in the best possible outcomes.

Organizations and communities like Women Offshore not only make it evident that there are women mariners all over the world, they are also great ways for female mariners to connect and share ideas and experiences. It also reinforces that the maritime community is growing and becoming more diverse, though there are still hurdles to overcome.

Working in the maritime industry provides a different lifestyle and being away from friends and family is difficult for any mariner, especially young mothers, but Lilly said she would recommend the career to anyone.

Technology has also vastly improved since Lilly was a cadet, and it is now easier to keep in touch with families and friends.

As much as she enjoys her time at sea, she said it is also important to enjoy your time at home. She currently lives in Jackson Hole, Wyoming, and thrives off of skiing, hiking, biking, or adventures in the mountains in her off time.

Her first trip as captain has been one of the most rewarding experiences of her career and she is humbled and honored by the recognition she has received for being APL's first female captain. Despite the challenge of being a young captain, the crew's trust has helped build her confidence and continue growing as a leader.

Lilly's achievements—sailing as a master to become the first female captain for a renowned large shipping company—have made her a true inspiration. For most women in maritime who may never have served with a female officer, Lilly is a role model paving the way for others. She reinforces this through her personal mantra: "Stay positive! Make the most out of every day!"



## DRIVING THE THING

# Kate McCue

Master, *Celebrity Edge*

based on LENA GÖTHBERG'S 114th episode of the Shipping Podcast

**K**ate McCue was just 12 when a family cruise to the Bahamas set her on the path to a career in the cruise industry. "I told my dad at the end of the cruise that I wanted to be the cruise director," Kate said during the 114th episode of Shipping Podcast—Voices from the Maritime Industry. "He said that I could do anything in the world I wanted, including drive the thing."

She took that comment to heart and, at just 37, she became the cruise industry's first American woman to captain a mega cruise ship, a hard-earned success that started at the California Maritime Academy. There, she earned a degree in business administration with a minor in marine transportation, capping her experience off with a third mate unlimited license.

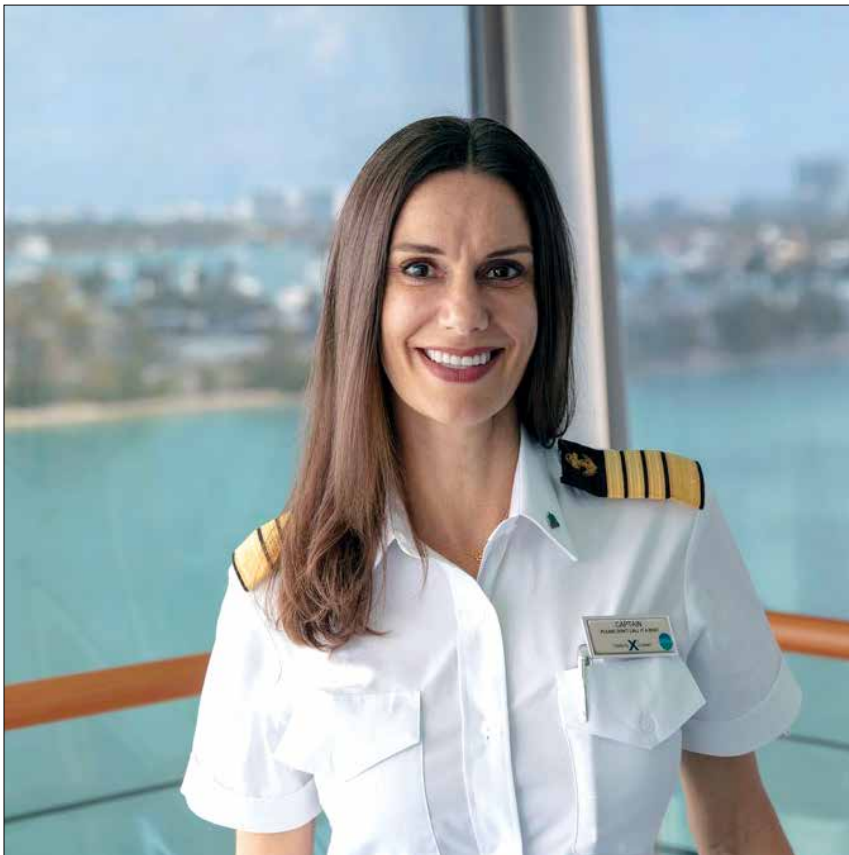
"I can sail anything from a tug boat to a super tanker and everything in between," Kate said.

Despite all of that, securing her first job wasn't easy sailing, though her gender was not the obstacle. The fact she was an American trying to break into an international company made her an enigma. It became a matter of getting a foot in the door, so she adjusted her resume to reflect that she was looking for a bartender's position. It worked, and 19 years later she became a captain, a position she has held for four years. Though she is 23 years into her career, she said it feels like the blink of an eye.

Time does tend to fly when your job is your passion, which is definitely the case for Kate. She works a three-months-on, three-months-off rotation and finds herself looking forward to getting back to the ship and her extended family when she is home on "vacation."

Her work family numbers more than 1,200 crew members, a rotating family of nearly 3,000 guests, and her 3-year-old hairless Sphynx cat, Bug Naked, who accompanies her on every working cruise.

"I am a dog person but dogs require a lot of paperwork and a lot of clearance, but with cats no one really seemed to care so much," Kate said. "I came across a sphynx cat on Instagram and I just thought that was the most unusual thing



Captain Kate McCue on the bridge of Celebrity Summit. Photo courtesy of Celebrity Cruise Lines

*I can sail anything  
from a tug boat  
to super tanker  
and everything in  
between.*

—Kate McCue



[I'd] ever seen. Then I started to realize, not having hair ... it's hypoallergenic. If she meets guests, the risk of allergy isn't there."

While a cat on a cruise ship is outside today's norm, 10 years ago it was unusual to see women in executive positions in the male-dominated cruise industry. That is definitely not the case anymore. There are five female hotel directors, two female staff captains in the fleet, [and] the majority of human resources onboard are female, Kate said. "We are still waiting for the first female chief engineer but it's only a matter of time before that happens," she said. "It's a really, really good thing."

The composition of the crew is not the only thing that has changed since 1996. When she started her career, using grease pencils on radar; LORAN C, a hyperbolic radio navigation system; and paper charts were all common practice.

"Our ships have no paper charts any longer," she said. "Everything is digital. It's funny, the amount of physical paper work has gone down, but the admin work, with email and reports, that has actually gone up significantly."

Though young, she understands her high-profile role as the first female American cruise ship captain comes with certain responsibilities. As she was moving from Royal Caribbean to Celebrity cruises, there was an external focus on the fact she was a woman and that came with a lot of public visibility. This caused her to take a hard look at how she got where she is today.

"I have the responsibility, because of the platform, to be as visual as possible; to be accessible to all," she added. "I have a LinkedIn account where I get a lot of requests from females just starting out [asking], where can they send resumes and if I have advice on certain


things. I didn't have that person to reach out to when I was coming up. It's important for me to give back in that way, to be accessible. If they have those questions then yes, I would take on that role model position."

Kate is a great example of how having good role models tends to create good role models. She said her parents were the kind of parents who made her believe she could accomplish anything. Now, in addition to all those who seek her out her advice, she's got one very important young woman looking up to her.

"My niece doesn't believe a female captain is a big deal, because why couldn't she be a female captain?" Kate said. "That is something my brother instilled in her, something she has seen firsthand from her aunt, and from her grandparents. I really give props to my parents for telling us that there was nothing we can't do in life."

Her husband, Nikola Petrovic, has extended that support. She said he is "one hundred and ten percent" supportive of her career even though it keeps them in separate time zones for much of the year. The couple met while working onboard a Royal Caribbean ship 13 years ago, and while she's sailing to locales ensuring thousands have a fabulous vacation, her husband is building ships in Italy.

It is possible, though, that Kate's next goal could find her working with her husband again. Though she does not want to build ships, she has said she would like to captain a ship from keel laying to bringing that ship into service. A process she likens to a ship captain's version of having a child.

For Captain Kate McCue, shattering the cruise industry's glass ceiling came as naturally as wearing her iconic red-soled Christian Louboutin heels on the bridge and bringing her cat to work. 

In September of 2019, Captain Kate McCue became master of the *Celebrity Edge*. In this photo the newly delivered ship makes her official arrival to Port Everglades. Photo courtesy of Celebrity Cruise Lines





## NAVIGATING UNCHARTED WATERS

# Susan Diane Orsini

Master, USNS *Trenton*

by LT KATY GRACE COPPOLA  
U.S. Coast Guard

Show up on time. Do my job. Respect my shipmates. Listen. Be thoughtful. Visualize scenarios. Anticipate. Keep things in perspective. Ask for help or guidance when needed. Be positive. Love life. Care for my people. Be appreciative.”

This is the personal mantra by which Captain Susan Diane Orsini lives. As the master of the USNS *Trenton*, Orsini has navigated uncharted waters as a female in the maritime industry with teamwork, dedication, and, the help and support of the crew for more than 30 years.

She believes it is important for leaders to recognize they stand tallest not by standing on the backs of others, but by allowing others to stand on their shoulders.

“I have not achieved anything all by myself,” Susan said. “I may have had a goal, a vision, but I needed my engineers, my stewards, my mates to make it happen.”

She believes in leading by example and that leaders need to recognize the value of collaboration and foster an environment that supports it.

“A leader has to recognize the role that leadership plays aboard ships. You are a leader. You are the decider. You have the responsibility for making that decision,” she said. “You must make decisions you will live with and

accept the consequences that may come with them. The people you lead will follow your lead knowing that you have considered all outcomes of your decision, are fully aware of your responsibility, and accept it completely.”

The characteristics of successful leaders remain constant:

- Moral courage
- Resourcefulness
- Integrity
- Consistency
- Respect for those being led

However, our world seems to be changing more rapidly now than ever before. It is common to resist change, but doing so won't stop it. Susan suggests future leaders keep their eye on emerging developments, like unmanned vessels or artificial intelligence, and challenge themselves to see how developments will be actualized. Visualize what can be anticipated and planned for, and seek out people who have a better understanding of the mechanics of emerging technologies and ideas. She also suggests rather than feeling threatened by new developments, future leaders see opportunities and how the transition to different technologies and ways of doing business can be incorporated.



Captain Susan Orsini studies the controls on the bridge during a voyage. Photo courtesy of Susan D. Orsini



Captain Susan Orsini on the 514-foot USNS *Zeus* during a Panama Canal transit. Photo courtesy of Susan D. Orsini



*I followed behind another woman known for exploiting her gender, so I had to demonstrate that I was just there to do a job, expecting no special favors.*

—Susan Diane Orsini

She credits her upbringing for the principles she upholds today. She was born at Homestead Air Force Base, Florida, and grew up in Evergreen, Colorado. Her father was a doctor and her mother earned her degree in teaching, but assisted her father with the management of his practice, while also taking care of her and her two older brothers, Randall and Robert. Robert enlisted in the Army and is now an attorney. Randall played for the NFL, earned his master's degree, and is an FBI special agent. She says her parents and brothers have all overcome odds, and repeatedly demonstrated the power of commitment, determination, perseverance, and integrity.

Susan's career in the maritime industry was purely accidental. She intended to follow her father into medicine, but her plans changed after her father strongly encouraged her to reconsider her plans, or at least consider other options. Although not easy, she listened. She was entering a world of unknowns and diverging possibilities. A high school counselor, Harry Hoffman, encouraged her to consider service academies and she recognized, when visiting her brothers at 'real' colleges, that she would likely benefit from the structure service academies provided. Since it was too late to transition directly from high school into an academy, her counselor suggested she consider an exchange program.

That advice set the stage for some of the significant accomplishments in her life. She became a Rotary Exchange Student to the Philippines, sponsored by the Diliman Rotary Club, and was later accepted into the United States Merchant Marine Academy, where she would graduate with a degree and a U.S. Coast Guard license.

While she says there were challenges and barriers, she never felt singled out as a woman, at least not while at the academy or while in the Navy, and only on a few occasions with Military Sealift Command. She said she earned a reputation for being a competent, reliable officer, irrespective of her gender.

"The maritime industry is a tough industry on everyone," Susan said. "I remember as a third mate, I followed behind another woman known for exploiting her gender, so I had to demonstrate that I was just there to do a job, expecting no special favors."

At one point, Susan realized that having a woman aboard ships was a greater adjustment for the men, than it was for her. Growing up in a male dominated family and school, and working in a male dominated industry was something she was used to. She forgot for the majority of the early part of her career she was the first woman many men had sailed with. She believes acceptance is a two-way street. Over the course of her career she has forged incredible, valued, and lifelong relationships with many of the men with whom she worked.

She encourages and supports women interested in pursuing a career in the maritime, but cautions that family and personal life will be hard. The challenge for integrating more women in the maritime industry, in her opinion, has little to do with how men and women get along, but much more to do with the traditional organization of the seagoing maritime industry. The rotational basis of so many months on and off, and the incredibly challenging conditions that this lifestyle places on family and relationships are considerable for both women and men.

There is no easy solution. There must be parity in opportunities for men and women. She believes there should be an opportunity for shoreside positions on a rotational basis. "This is not about manufacturing artificial jobs to provide an opportunity for a woman to have a child. It would benefit employers and employees equally," she said. "The shore organization of any maritime organization can benefit significantly from having mariners working in those organizations' offices."

Implementing a structure that integrates shore and seagoing personnel provides insight into at-sea reality, while the shoreside mariner would have an opportunity to gain greater knowledge in their area of expertise. She believes mutual respect and understanding of organizational roles would be fostered between the shore and sea



Captain Susan Orsini in discussion with a crewmember on the USNS Trenton. Photo courtesy of Susan D. Orsini

going personnel. Additionally, sea-going personnel, men and women alike, would have greater work/life balance and in turn, mariner retention rates would rise, while corporate knowledge and experience levels would improve.

The maritime industry is incredibly diverse. Susan challenges anyone to go aboard any ship, and not find people of different color, faith, economic background, etc. Proportionally though, women are under-represented in the maritime demographic. She believes that solely having women join the maritime workforce is short-sighted, and what needs to be identified is how to retain those women. Her ideas?

“Disseminate information about the incredible and vast opportunities there are in the maritime industry, through ALL states, not merely in coastal states,” she said. “[And] organizations should develop, implement, and practice a work rotation that balances sea and shore positions to enhance work/life balance.”

Balancing a career and family life, as most people know, is not always easy. For Susan the same is true. She loves going to sea and loves her family and spending time with them. However, she does not want to quit her job or work in a position that is less satisfying. After 30 years, the people who are important to her understand the cycle, but for those who have not been exposed to this type of rotation, it is a significant adjustment. Although single with no children, her greatest stress is letting down those she cares about.


When people are overdue to go home, the common concerns she hears include, “Will I be home for my kid’s graduation, my anniversary, closing on my house, my kid’s first birthday, my wedding?” Many mariners are faced with the ultimatum of continuing to go to sea

and watching their relationships erode, decay, and possibly fail, but having an income that can support them. Alternately, they can resign and work on repairing relationships, but, in most cases, with a significantly reduced income. In her mind, the above leads to attrition when the industry needs retention. When people begin to think of starting families and get out to do so it is a huge loss that has a cumulative effect of losing trained, qualified people. She believes a significant amount of investment should be made in retaining qualified personnel.

Susan has advice on how to overcome adversity for women pursuing a maritime career today.

“You don’t have to do everything yourself to prove that you can do it. To think so puts an incredible amount of pressure on yourself and is inefficient,” she said. “Pause and take a look at male organizations—teams, squads—they work together. This concept should be something women learn from and embody.

“But I know from experience it is hard to overcome that feeling that you need to prove yourself,” she said. “It’s important to recognize there is more than one way to do so, and gain acceptance of your shipmates. Suggest that something be done together instead of tackling every task as a lone individual. This approach will foster a positive working relationship with men and women alike.”

Navigating the uncharted waters as a female in the maritime industry, Susan has led by example and continues to demonstrate the power of commitment, determination, perseverance, and integrity. Her personal mantra and advice from mentors who guided and allowed her to develop as a leader and a mariner to rise through the ranks and become the master of the USNS *Trenton*. Thank you for your inspiration and service! 

Captain Susan Orsini and her crew pose for a photo in front of the USNS *Trenton*. Photo courtesy of Susan D. Orsini





# MERCHANT MARINERS: ENGINEERING

*The work engineering officers perform daily maintaining, repairing, and operating commercial or government vessels, is demanding and rewarding.*

*The maritime industry is very dynamic, not only from a transportation perspective, but also due to the variety of employment opportunities available. The fact our industry is critical to our nation's economic security and contributes significantly to our national defense also attracts those with ambition and purpose to our profession. The men and women I have sailed with over my career were obviously drawn into our industry for a reason, and I think that speaks to the type of person they are, having high expectations for achievement in a challenging career.*

—Marshall Ainley  
President, Marine Engineers Beneficial Association





## RIISING TO THE CHALLENGES

# Lindsay Smith

Chief Engineer, *MS Pride of America*

by LCDR ANNE BESSER  
*U.S. Coast Guard*

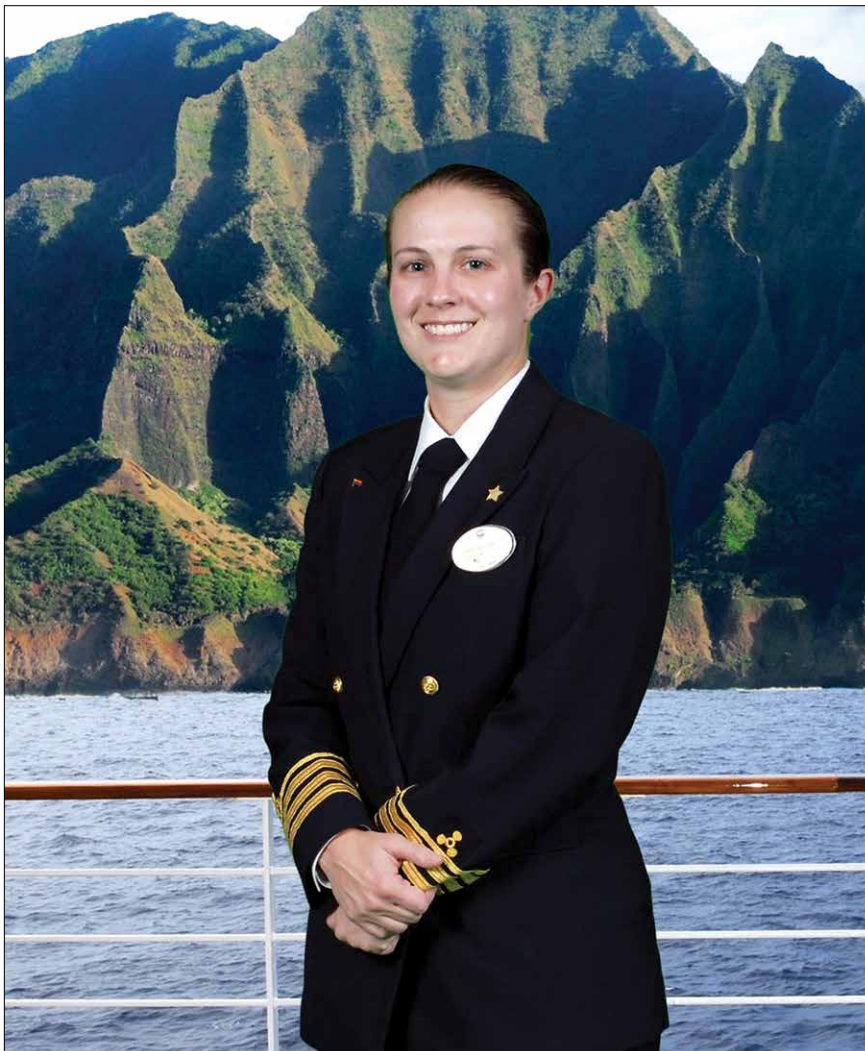
Lindsay Smith was looking for a career in engineering when she learned about the Maine Maritime Academy, and its student body of just under 1,000. At this public maritime school in Castine, Maine, Lindsay found the hands-on training and education that put her on the path to a career trifecta. The maritime industry allowed her to work in engineering, stay out from behind a desk—most of the time—and afforded the opportunity to travel for work and leisure.

She credits Maine Maritime Academy, with teaching her how to prioritize work, manage time, and motivate a team to use its strengths to accomplish the task, thanks to several leadership roles. It also taught her that sometimes hard decisions need to be made and how to use all available information to make the best possible decision. “Maine Maritime was able to teach me the basics of what I needed to know, but I had the wherewithal to understand that I did not know everything,” Lindsay said.

After graduating in 2000 with a Bachelor of Science degree in marine engineering technology, Lindsay began her career with TransOcean as a third assistant engineer. As the only female on board, she initially found it difficult to connect with the rest of the crew. She recognized the experience was new for everyone and made a concerted effort to engage her coworkers in conversation about the uncertainty of having a woman on board. It was through developing trust and good communications that she built professional relationships during her nearly three years with the company, but in 2003, Lindsay began sailing with Norwegian Cruise lines.

“Working for a cruise line is a completely different experience, compared to any other type of shipping company,” she said. “You have to work with human cargo, which can be challenging at times.”

In 2003, Lindsay began sailing with Norwegian Cruise Lines as a third assistant engineer. In her nearly 16 years with the cruise line, she has served in the positions of third, second, and first staff chief, eventually earning the title of chief engineer. In fact, upon her promotion to chief engineer with Norwegian, she became the first female to hold that position for a major cruise line.





Lindsay speaks humbly of her ongoing experience as part of a crew responsible for keeping a small city of systems that is a cruise ship, running. During her time with Norwegian, she has done things she never thought she would be doing while sailing. Onboard the M/S *Pride of America*, she oversaw much of the installation of four exhaust gas scrubbers, which allow the ship to reduce sulfur emissions. This was in addition to the installation of 32 new suites AND a new restaurant—all while the ship was in service. Those jobs alone would be a major undertaking, but Lindsay was asked to do them in addition to the everyday demands of her regular job. To balance her already busy schedule of port calls and voyages with the long-term orchestration of contracts, deliveries, onboard installations, and daily tasks requires superb skills and knowledge. It was her responsibility to ensure the vessel sailed and ran seamlessly while meeting new timelines and international rules, an often challenging endeavor, in addition to addressing new customer needs.

But Lindsay has not gotten to where she is simply by being a good shipboard engineer. She understands that her valuable work experience is something to draw upon as she continues to rise to each new challenge. “I’m not sure that I would do anything differently,” she said. “All of my experiences have shaped who I am and how I do my job today.”

It is her experience that she turns to as a maritime industry leader, and lead she must! She is charged with directing a department of 55 personnel, about double the normal crew size on a commercial ship. This experience, too, has served her well.

“I think that leading by example is an extremely important quality,” Lindsay said. “A leader should not ask their employees to do something that they are not willing to do themselves. They should be willing to work alongside their employees if the situation warrants it.”

The example she sets shows young female mariners the possibility of a future career path. There is also an important, yet understated, result of her role in the industry that not only influences budding female engineers, but also all maritime personnel. “With the new generation of engineers going into the industry there is a higher acceptance of women onboard ships because the men have grown up with women in these types of jobs,” she said.


The more women who enter and remain in the maritime industry means this male-dominated industry’s exposure to women will increase, as will conversations, communications, and connections. For Lindsay, it is all about the connections. Her favorite part of the job is the “unbelievable friendships” she has made since she began in this industry. “The best part of sailing is the guys I work with,” she said. “I have a great group of guys in the department and they make the job fun. It makes the long hours and the days away from home easier to handle.”

*With the new generation of engineers going into the industry there is a higher acceptance of women onboard ships because the men have grown up with women in these types of jobs.*

— Lindsay Smith

Successful mariners often cite connections as a contributing factor to career advancement. Lindsay said a former boss, who also was a mentor, contributed to her success. “He was someone who was encouraging and was constantly challenging me to improve,” she said. “He was someone who I could talk to, vent to, ask advice of, and never have to worry about it turning into a negative experience. He was able to show me how to be encouraging and how to get the best out of people.” It is clear Lindsay values this kind of approachability, as well as the capacity to “listen when needed and lead when necessary,” in a leader.

When she is not leading her engineering department, she is traveling. While the long hours, days, weeks, and months away from friends and family can prove difficult, Lindsay encourages others to seek as much balance between sea and home as possible. When home, she tries to spend time with friends and family, but she also finds friends made while underway often make for like-minded travel buddies. Making the most of the unusual work schedule, she said she appreciates the long periods of time off, because it has given her the opportunity to see the world. For now, this arrangement suits her just fine. “There are never two days the same and I am never bored,” she said. “I guess when I start to hate my job or get bored, then I will look for the next chapter.”

Given the ever-changing technology and challenges the maritime industry faces, it is likely that will not happen for a long time. With her anything-is-possible attitude and don’t-let-anything-stop-you drive, it looks as though she will be rising to meet those challenges for a long time to come. 



SELECT, DON'T SETTLE

# Mary Frances Culnane

President, Culnane Maritime Consulting, LLC

by LT CATHERINE PARIS AND LT JESSICA ANDERSON  
*U.S. Coast Guard*

Imagine a woman decked out in a hard hat, steel-toe boots, and work clothes authoritatively walking around shipyards, all the while followed by a toy poodle, Arnold, also sporting a hard hat, albeit a much smaller version. For those of you who have worked around the maritime community, this is a very different image than what a shipyard typically brings to mind. But, when it comes to this woman, rather than simply taking the path less traveled, she paved one that few could have ever imagined or navigated.

Mary 'Mare' Frances Culnane grew up interested in pursuing an appointment to one of the federal service academies. Her step-father was a 1949 Naval Academy graduate and she often played "Army" with her brothers, so it was no surprise that she was drawn to the military. Before she started attending middle school, a family vacation to watch a formal review at West Point diverted her from the Army and cemented a new goal of becoming a plebe in Annapolis. Her love of the sea was born amongst the gorgeous ocean views and those of vessels transiting the Eisenhower Locks on the St. Lawrence Seaway.

Luckily, her high school graduation year, 1976, coincided with service academies opening the applicant pool to women for the first time. With her sights set on the Naval Academy, Mare sought an appointment from her congressman and diligently prepared for the interview. While she was disappointed to discover there were no remaining Naval Academy nominations for the year, she managed to attain a telegram nomination to the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy (USMMA). Knowing nothing of Kings Point or life in the Merchant Marine, she brought the nomination to her high school teacher, who promptly provided her with a Kings Point catalogue.

"Gazing at the photos and curriculum my instructor kept repeating, 'You have to do this,'" she said. "The rest is history. I love being part of the maritime industry."

Upon attending the USMMA, she immediately felt accepted by her fellow cadets, attributing it to their excitement over a young woman showing interest in that line of work. Her willingness and desire to learn set her apart from the rest, as she readily accepted any project and demonstrated great welding proficiency among other skills,

earning her way into the engineering 'gang.' Some felt she had taken a man's job or didn't belong at sea. Others cornered her just to emphasize their opinion—that she ought to be married and back home working. While there were hardships, she managed to adeptly navigate her way through those challenges.

When Mare started as a cadet, only two basic academic tracks were available, deck or engine, with an option to pursue both, and graphing calculators were a luxury compared to the slide rule cadets were issued. The heavy course load operated on a quarterly rotation that included two six-month stints at sea. This resulted in a very strenuous academic schedule revolving around Sea Year, one of the most innovative maritime training programs in existence. Incorporating total immersion, Sea Year provided a realistic approach to understanding the seagoing profession—solitude, lack of sleep, storms, laborious work, crew member conflict and camaraderie, port calls, and limited interaction with friends and family. But there's also the beauty of the sea against the backdrop of sunrises and sunsets. For Mare, the experience was unlike any other, providing knowledge that no classroom could convey or replicate. It was this time spent at sea that she considers her greatest preparation for the stresses and complex tasks of her career, both seagoing and shoreside.

The USMMA taught her time management, to triage projects and schedules, and the ability to quickly address and adjust shipboard systems for optimal performance through keen observation. These were just a few of the skills she was able to employ while working

Mary Frances Culnane's toy poodle, Arnold, is her shadow while she goes about her work day at the shipyard. Photo courtesy of Mary France Culnane





in the maritime industry after her 1980 graduation. As she worked to achieve her goals, eventually becoming one of the first women to sail on a chief engineer's license, she focused on qualities that she respected in a leader—respect, even-keeled personality, confidence, and accountability.

It was these ideals that allowed her to achieve a successful career and develop the backbone she deems necessary for anyone who interested in a career in leadership. She values respect on multiple levels, believing that leaders should respect themselves, others, their industry, and its history. In terms of an even-keeled personality, she sees no need for theatrics. If you maintain an even keel, your vessel will reach its destination more quickly. Although your stomach could be churning, always give an impression of being cool and collected since crew members gravitate towards confidence. Finally, she cannot stress enough the need for both personal accountability and that of officers and crew.

Her career was not always smooth sailing. As a first engineer, her working relationship with one of the chief engineers left much to be desired. She shadowed this individual to stay current on machinery he had contact with, but would jump in to manage issues without properly informing him. By undermining his authority and circumventing the chain of command, her actions created an unacceptable line of communication. She learned from this mistake, realizing she ought to attempt alternative methods of communication as opposed to distancing herself from the situation. However, Mare did manage to complete tasking with such efficiency that the chief engineer was surprisingly satisfied with her work. Despite the rocky start to the professional relationship, she gained his respect and developed a friendship once she pursued shoreside work.

Not only did she encounter challenges with coworkers along the way, but she also had the difficulty of being one of the only women in the industry at the time. She recognizes that adversity may exist on multiple levels and that the key to overcoming this is adaptability. She believes acceptance of women in the maritime industry evolved over the past 40 years because women working in various maritime roles overcame adversity making themselves less of a novelty. As the first group that witnessed women working on ships or in non-traditional shoreside positions retired, those rising up in the ranks were more accustomed to, and respected, women in these positions.

By accepting individual responsibility and mastering the concept of situational awareness, she was able to chart her way through adverse conditions. She also had an invaluable support network and knowledge of processes and procedures that allowed her to handle adversity on all levels. Her advice to women in similar situations would be, "Implement [your] phenomenal sixth sense to crush ... adverse situations."




Mary Frances Culnane and fellow crewmembers pop up for a photo during an engine overhaul. Photo courtesy of Mary France Culnane

Mare caught the final wave of the "romance of the seas," when cargo operations at exotic ports could take days to weeks and there were large crews with whom to share time and sea stories. Present-day operations entail fewer crew members, more demanding port calls with significantly less time in port, and more training requirements. She sees this combination as creating a major hindrance to achieving work/life balance and a recipe for a more negative atmosphere, with the social and lively ways of the past obscured by the workload of the present. Therefore, taking into account the current industry changes, she would be hesitant to recommend a career in the maritime field, but recognizes that new cadets and crew members would not miss what they haven't experienced.

It's clear that she has had, and continues to have, a phenomenal career. Highlights include shipping out with Exxon for nearly 10 years and becoming the first woman to sign articles as the chief engineer. She also served ashore as port engineer for the Military Sealift Command in the Pacific, and became the marine lubes technical sales engineer at Chevron for the entire east coast territory.

She joined Chevron in the San Francisco Bay Area in the mid-1990s. There she served in technical marketing for market refinery technology; managed fuel, lubes, and energy conservation; and finally promoted into the marine consulting group to manage the new construction of tankers and serve as interim head of marine services group. Following her time with Chevron, she joined the San Francisco Bay Area Water Transit Authority as the manager of marine engineering, and later as the interim executive director of the Water Emergency Transportation Authority where she was involved in designing new concept ferries for transiting the bay. Mare was appointed to the National Maritime Security advisory committee by the secretary of homeland security and also served on the executive board of the San Francisco Marine Exchange.

She currently resides in western Pennsylvania, where she runs Culnane Maritime Consulting, LLC. It's safe to say she lived—and continues to live out—her mantra of "Select, don't settle." 



## MARITIME PILOTS

*Pilots are considered the elite of the mariner community. The work and life, of a pilot can be difficult, demanding (both mentally and physically), and dangerous with heavy responsibilities. It requires a deep, long-term commitment to the profession. The six trailblazing women pilots profiled here are excellent representatives of all the women pilots in the United States, each of whom has made that commitment. The American Pilots' Association is proud of them and also proud that the United States was the country with the first woman pilot in the world and is currently the country with the most women pilots.*

—Captain Jorge Viso  
President, American Pilots Association





**ACTIONS, NOT WORDS, BABY!**

# Nancy Wagner

Captain, San Francisco Bar Pilots (Retired)

by LCDR CORRINE PLUMMER  
*U.S. Coast Guard*

**W**ith an indomitable spirit, a disciplined mind, and unwavering commitment, Captain Nancy Wagner became the first female ship pilot in the United States, but her path was not always easy. “It was there. It existed. It just didn’t exist for me.”

That was how Nancy Wagner viewed the United States Merchant Marine Academy as a child. When she graduated high school in 1973, women were not permitted to attend Kings Point. It didn’t matter that her father was a 1945 Kings Point graduate and active merchant mariner, or that she grew up attending Mariner football games on the New York campus. That she had been sailing on her family’s boat since she was three months old didn’t hold any sway with Kings Point. At that time, women were not admitted into any of the federal service academies.

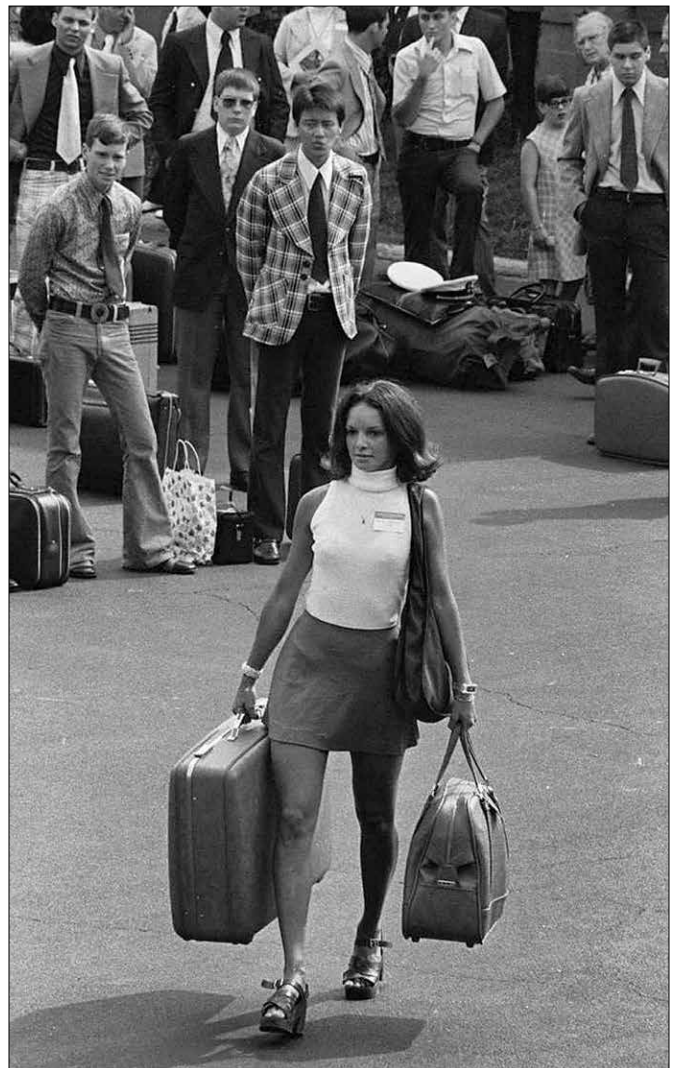
Just one year later, however, while Nancy was enrolled as a communications major at Syracuse University, she read a news article that the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy was opening its doors to women. So, in the summer of 1974, Nancy Wagner became one of the first 15 women enrolled at Kings Point. Four years later, she was among one of eight women to graduate. Seven years after that, she obtained her masters license and by 1987, she began the rigorous two year training program to become a San Francisco Bar Pilot. In 1990, Captain Nancy Wagner became the first female ship pilot in the United States. The accelerated timeline from midshipman to pilot is misleading, however, because her career was never easy or without hardship. Nancy was a woman in a man’s world with skeptical observers and many nay-sayers.

“There were those people who wanted me to succeed and those who were waiting for me to fail,” she said.

Although she was a bit ahead of her time when it came to the inclusion of women in the maritime community, timing was optimal for her progression as a professional mariner. She was at the crest of the shipping industry wave when business was booming. Nancy refined her nautical knowledge and navigational skillset by working for intervals of two to three months straight, quickly amassing the sea time necessary to obtain a masters license. She remembers always upgrading her license at the earliest opportunity throughout her career.

The breakneck speed at which she obtained her masters license—seven years—was indicative of her sheer will to reach the top of her field.

While still working in the commercial shipping industry, a ship pilot told her about the open applications for the San Francisco Bar Pilots and recommended she



In the summer of 1974, Nancy Wagner arrived at the Academy on processing in day 31 years after the Academy first opened its doors. Photo courtesy of Nancy Wagner

submit an application. Bar pilots are tasked with having the local expert knowledge of the area's waterways—everything from tides, currents, and localized shoaling to the location of wrecks or subsurface pipeline crossings—and navigating a variety of vessel types and sizes with crews of different foreign nationalities safely into and out of the port and to/from their docks.

When Nancy questioned the likelihood of her successfully negotiating the candidacy process, the ship pilot emphatically urged her to apply. It turned out to be a well-founded suggestion, as she was selected and began the pilot training program in July 1987 after the rigorous initial testing period.

As an apprentice pilot, Nancy shadowed and learned from the senior pilots while gaining hands-on experience,



Captain Nancy Wagner poses for a photo in front of a San Francisco Bar Pilot Boat. Photo courtesy of Nancy Wagner

*From about midnight to 3 a.m., I undocked a foreign container ship in Oakland, California, and took them out to sea. By 4 a.m., I was inbound on a U.S.-flagged tanker ship. While on the bridge, the ship captain asked me how long I had been doing this job. I looked at my watch and said about four hours.*

—Nancy Wagner

a process that required equal amounts skill, confidence, and humility. Already established in her career, she found herself at the bottom again. Nevertheless, she was fueled by what can only be described as an indomitable determination to succeed.

Nancy credits much of her confidence to her first mentor, her father. A 1945 graduate of the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy and a seafaring chief engineer, initially her father was not entirely supportive of his daughter's wishes to attend Kings Point and follow in his wake. He knew the likely hardships his daughter would face while attempting to be among the first of her gender to graduate from a federal service academy. After a time, however, he told her that "if he [any male cadet] can do it, you can do it." This self-reliance has been a trademark of Nancy's throughout her life. So despite starting at the bottom again, Nancy was determined to outperform all of her peers on her way to becoming a San Francisco Bar Pilot.

Not everyone wanted to see her achieve her dream or acknowledge her expertise and authority as a ship



captain. While onboard foreign vessels, the male senior pilot would often need to reassure the crews that Captain Wagner had the con and that she was empowered to direct the movement of the ship. Even within the ranks of U.S. professional mariners, Nancy was often the subject of disparaging or discouraging sentiments, sometimes directly to her face. She never let it bother her, though.

"I just did my job," she said coolly.

After two years as an apprentice, completed the training curriculum and, once again, she had to overcome obstacles to achieve her goal. There weren't any pilot vacancies, so she could not obtain work as a pilot. For eight months, two days a week, she kept her skills current by riding along on ships with more senior pilots. After eight long months of stress and uncertainty, a vacancy finally opened. She became a San Francisco Bar Pilot in 1990. Her parents still lived on the East Coast and were unable to travel to San Francisco to see their daughter become the first female ship pilot in the United States.

Nancy described the most rewarding experience in her career as her first night on the job as a solo pilot.

"From about midnight to 3 a.m., I undocked a foreign container ship in Oakland, California, and took them out to sea. By 4 a.m., I was inbound on a U.S.-flagged tanker ship," she said. "While on the bridge, the ship captain asked me how long I had been doing this job. I looked at my watch and said about four hours."

Although Nancy was now licensed to pilot ships on her own, she still had to prove herself on a daily basis. About 90 percent of the ships she handled were foreign-flagged vessels with foreign crews, many of them from countries that did not accept women in leadership positions. After navigating countless ships through the Bay Area, many of which were repeat customers on set transit schedules, Nancy earned professional respect from these mariners. They went from not knowing how to address her—they used to call her "Mrs. Pilot"—to asking other pilots "where's Captain Nancy?" when she was not assigned to their job.

She retired in 2015 after 25 years as a San Francisco Bar Pilot and more than 40 years in the maritime industry. She said unequivocally that she would not have done anything differently, but when it comes to recommending the profession to young women she has a caveat.

"Only if she is strong and willing to sacrifice," she said.

Nancy made personal sacrifices 40 years ago that are still benefitting women in the maritime community today. In 1974, the incoming U.S. Merchant Marine Academy class was the test-case for women at federal service academies. Without their successes, it could have taken much longer for other service academies to join suit—the other federal service academies began



Captain Nancy Wagner appears to levitate as she disembarks a ship and onto the pilot boat. Photo courtesy of Nancy Wagner

admitting women in the summer of 1976. There are currently about 30 female ship pilots in the United States. The opportunities for women are now there. They exist because of pioneers like Captain Nancy Wagner who persevered.

It's no surprise that her personal mantra reflects this attitude. What is it?

"Acta non verba, baby!" she said with unhesitating enthusiasm.

Indeed, her actions serve as a shining example of what one incredible and determined woman can and did accomplish. Captain Wagner, thank you. ▀



PILOTING IS HER PASSION

# Carolyn Kurtz

Captain, Tampa Bay Pilots

by LTJG ALISON DENNING  
*U.S. Coast Guard*

Captain Carolyn Kurtz was born and raised in the Kew Gardens neighborhood of Queens, New York. As she grew up, she had the opportunity to spend her summer vacations aboard merchant ships, seeing the world as the daughter of a charterer for a shipping company. The love for the sea and passion for navigation led her to consider a career as a ship's officer. She graduated from the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy in 1986 and, with her freshly printed Coast Guard license, packed up her sea bag and took a third mate job on the very day of graduation. She was one of the very first in her class to go to sea.

She sailed for eight years and earned her unlimited tonnage master's license. Through the guidance of a friend who was a pilot for five years in Tampa, Florida, she earned her pilot's license. Carolyn was selected as a Tampa Bay Pilot in 1995 and became the very first female pilot in the state of Florida. Still actively

piloting vessels throughout Tampa Bay, she is also a commissioner and current chair of the Florida Board of Pilot Commissioners, current chair of Coast Guard's Navigation Safety Advisory Council, and helps oversee the pilot training program in Tampa. In her own words, "I love being a pilot."

To Carolyn, by far the most rewarding aspect of her job as a pilot is immediately seeing the fruits of her labor by allowing safe passage of ships to and from sea. She gets great job satisfaction when a vessel's master shakes her hand and asks when she is coming back after a successful maneuvering period. She gives back by training the next generation of pilots and serving on the Florida Board of Pilot Commissioners, a gubernatorial appointment. In her time as a pilot, she believes she has been treated with respect and class by all of the navigational officers and crew on board the ships she pilots in from sea.

Captain Carolyn Kurtz dwarfed by the tanker she is about to take to sea. Photo courtesy of Carolyn Kurtz






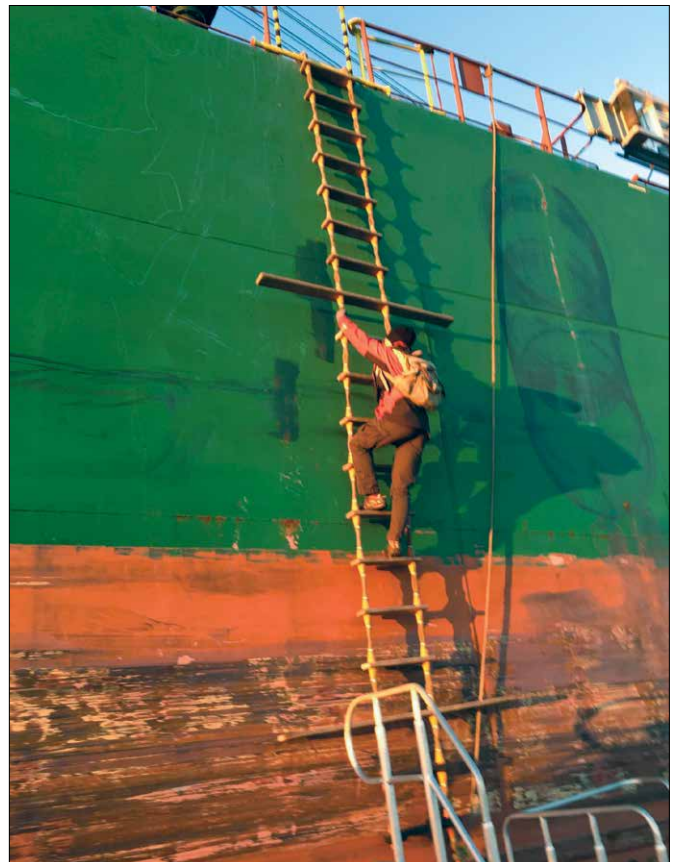
While serving in the shipping industry, Carolyn said she remembers a personally trying moment when she was sailing as chief mate on board a U.S. vessel. She had fired an able-bodied seaman, also known as an AB, for unacceptable performance. Her vessel's master went behind her back and re-hired the AB. She felt undermined and undervalued. She determined to push through and hold her head up, doubling down on her own personal resolution that no one onboard had to like her personally, but whether they did would never affect her work ethic.

When asked what she is most proud of in her life, her eyes lit up as she described her family and her son. She and her partner waited for many years to start a family so she could finish sailing, upgrading to a master's license, and settling in her new career as a pilot. Her son, her pride and joy, is heading off to college this fall. Discussing the balance of motherhood and a career as an actively-working pilot began the conversation about the difficulties women in the marine industry face when trying to navigate their career and their family.

Even though Kings Point was the first federal service academy to graduate women, true integration into the maritime community is still 50 years away. Carolyn has observed that many companies operate as if all employees are male and concessions must be made to female employees to deal with the realities of parenthood. Questions of how to deal with pregnant employees, postpartum employees, and those with young families are not always answered in a way that respects women as equals. Her assessment was that a shipping company was more likely to make accommodations for an employee with an illness requiring long-term treatment than for a pregnant employee.

The best way to summarize her ideas on making the maritime industry inclusive to all people is to erase the "male standard" and view employees as people. The male standard establishes policies, expectations, and requirements assuming the employee is a male, either single or with a spouse that takes care of all aspects of child care. Special allowances shouldn't have to be made for women joining the maritime industry, but instead a standard set of accommodations for the realities of family life should be the norm.

When asked about being recognized in this publication as an impactful female in the maritime industry, she said she's humbled and proud, but also feels a bit sad. She is most proud of her own professional achievements not because she is a woman but because she is a person. Her greatest hope is that all mariners, especially those who are women, will be recognized on their merits instead of their gender. And, Captain Carolyn Kurtz has certainly been recognized on the merits of her career. 



Captain Carolyn Kurtz ascends a pilot ladder before bringing this ship into the Port of Tampa, Florida. Photos courtesy of Carolyn Kurtz



FOLLOW YOUR HEART

# Deborah Dempsey

Captain, Columbia River Bar Pilot (Retired)

by LCDR TIFFANY A. DUFFY  
U.S. Coast Guard

**P**assion. Heart. Gumption. Community. Four solid descriptors that characterize Captain Deborah “Debbie” Dempsey. On the brink of turning 70 and looking forward to celebrating this milestone at a reunion with longtime friends from the University of Vermont, Debbie has an awe-inspiring merchant mariner resume. She retired after 22 years as a prestigious Columbia River Bar Pilot, sailing foreign vessels “across the bar.” At 3 miles wide and 6 miles long, the Columbia River Bar is recognized globally as one of the most dangerous stretches of water to navigate in the world.

Youthful interactions with Coast Guard Academy cadets at Williams-Mystic, a maritime studies program in Connecticut, did not seem important at the time. Nor did her father’s Coast Guard service and experience teaching

Captain Debbie Dempsey enjoying retirement with a day of hiking. Photo courtesy of Debbie Dempsey



these same cadets, but both served as later motivation as she sailed the freight service vessel *Betsy Ross* across a closed Columbia River bar on a particularly stormy night. Battered by notoriously treacherous weather, she shadowed a qualified pilot that day.

Prior to becoming the first female Columbia River Bar Pilot in 1994, Debbie spent 18 years sailing, achieving an unlimited master’s license in the process. The Columbia River Bar Pilots specifically sought her out for a number of reasons, including the fact she held the required sea time as unlimited master, a superior reputation as a merchant mariner, and her grit in a predominately male industry. There was one more important factor: Her gender.

Debbie was naturally drawn to sailing. Originally from Essex, Connecticut, her family spent many recreational hours sailing the Connecticut River. After earning a bachelor’s degree from the University of Vermont as a pre-med student, she decided to “bum around” delivering yachts for three years because her heart was just not into her earned degree. It was a perfect storm of circumstances that launched her impressive career. The first was a Maine Maritime graduate who encouraged her to pursue her passion. The second was the 1972 implementation of Title IX, a federal law prohibiting discrimination on the basis of sex in federally funded education programs or activities.

Given her academic background, Maine Maritime allowed her to double up her classes and complete the program in a truncated two and a half years. This allowed her to claim the title of first female to graduate from a maritime or service academy in 1976. Even more impressive, she was Maine Maritime’s valedictorian.

But what helped her academically hindered her athletically. Because of her four years at the University of Vermont, the NCAA would not allow her to participate on the Maine Maritime sailing team. Instead, she performed a work-study job maintaining the team’s boats, one of three jobs during her studies at the academy that helped pay for tuition and still gave her time on the sailboats.

After graduation, at a time when only eight of 88 Maine Maritime graduates had licensed jobs, she sailed as a brand new third mate. The bewildered captain greeted her on the bridge with, “I never thought I’d see this day!”



“What day is that captain?” she asked.

“Women on the bridge,” he countered. His reaction did not phase her. She was so enamored by the thrill of sailing on a license that her work ethic transcended gender bias.

Her career choice also led her to her husband. Captain Jack Dempsey sailed unlicensed and worked his way up through the ranks to become a master with Lykes Bros. Steamship Company. He was impressed by Debbie’s passion for the sea and mentored her. They fell in love and later married. She credits him for guiding her to success including some jovial rousing that inspired her confidence when she was called to rescue the M/V *Lyra*.

Debbie had captained the *Lyra* in 1989, making six trips in and out of the Persian Gulf during Operation Desert Storm. After the Persian Gulf War, the U.S. government decided to purchase the roll-on-roll-off vessel as a needed asset. It was being dead ship towed from Baltimore to New Orleans when it broke its tow in 50-knot winds and 20-foot seas. Lykes asked her to emergency anchor the vessel in the hope of preventing it from grounding on Frying Pan Shoals off Cape Fear with 387,000 gallons of oil on board. She performed an atypical two anchor evolution that saved the vessel and saw it delivered to New Orleans unscathed. She and her crew received several awards, including the Admiral of the Sea Award and the Navy’s Meritorious Public Service Award Medal. All the while Debbie, always humble, gave credit to her crew.

While humble and passionate about her career, she harbors another passion. Captain Jack Dempsey passed away from lung cancer in 1996 as a direct result of his tobacco habit prior to their 18 year marriage. Because of this, Debbie fiercely advocates smoking cessation among mariners. She is so adamant about this that she challenged some cadets to quit, paying two of them the cost of cigarettes for a year. So overwhelmed by her passion, they permanently kicked the habit.

But work is still her most rewarding experience. From the moment she became a second mate, she loved celestial navigation, taking star fixes, and correcting charts. Her crew thrived under her leadership with every journey on the water. Later in her career, she relished in interactions with foreign crews as a Columbia River Bar Pilot.

In retirement she misses the crew camaraderie and the voyages to obscure ports most of which Americans have never heard. She is still devoted to mentoring the next generation of mariners, attending the last 10 Women on the Water conferences as a panelist and keynote speaker. She is naturally called to mentor the next generation of American seafarers and is credited with mentoring other women of note who achieved firsts in the maritime industry, like Captain Sandra “Sandy” Bendixen, the first female Puget Sound Pilot.

There is a long list of individuals that mentored Debbie throughout her career: professors, training ship



Debbie Dempsey scales a pilot ladder at sea before she takes the ship through the intersection of the Columbia River and the Pacific Ocean, what many consider the most dangerous stretch of water in the world. Photo courtesy of Debbie Dempsey

officers, licensed and unlicensed crew members, the list seems endless. Most intriguing is that all her mentors were male. She acknowledged that the Merchant Marines isn’t for everyone, minority or majority, but a successful mariner must “keep your eyes open and your mouth shut,” as best put by one of her mentors, Captain Lou Hathaway. His message resonated because it highlighted the real value of each crew member.

Debbie’s advice to today’s mariners can translate to any career path: Be decisive. She believes the ability to focus and react under pressure is critical because there will be many tests in operating environments that will require precisely timed risk-based decisions. The crew will be counting on the captain and, in some cases, their lives depend on it. Speaking of the crew, she stressed the importance of camaraderie, an intangible element that congeals a group in the face of adversity. She said one of the most important lessons she learned from her husband was the need to earn the respect of her crew. She recalled fondly that sailing has changed significantly since the days she was a third mate using flashing lights for vessel communications. She challenges the merchant fleet to have intentional face-to-face interactions because it is easy to default to technological distractions to pass time while underway.

To this end, she acknowledges that the way merchant mariners are trained has changed dramatically. The required hours are more rigorous and formal school training is the norm. She encourages the present-day mariner to seize the experience-centric opportunities afforded to them. There are academic lessons to learn at the academies but seafarer successes is not achieved via books alone. It is in the experience gained making course corrections after making mistakes that separates the good from the legendary.

As a retiree, Debbie continues to be a profound influence on others drawn to sailing. She is a founder of the Community Boating Center on Bellingham Bay, Washington, serving the board of directors as treasurer and finance committee chair. Through this non-profit organization, she fosters small watercraft education, ensuring safe on-the-water recreation and marine stewardship. It is her true calling to teach people to love what they do, be prepared for the uncertainty, and make a difference in others’ lives. ■



KEEP YOUR EYE ON THE PRIZE

# Anne McIntyre

Captain, Columbia River Pilot

by LCDR JAMIE KOPPI  
*U.S. Coast Guard*

**M**any women have forged the path for women of the future and Captain McIntyre is one of them. As a young girl with a passion for sailing growing

up in Southern California she was unaware of job opportunities in the maritime industry, however that changed during a part-time job she had working for



Captain Anne McIntyre pauses for a photo during a transit on the Columbia River. Photos courtesy of Anne McIntyre



an America's Cup sailing team. This was the first time she was exposed to the maritime industry and heard from the sailors about job opportunities, pay scales, and unique work schedules. As a 1988 graduate from California Maritime Academy, an era when the percentage of female cadets was very low, she excelled academically, earning a Bachelor of Science in nautical industrial technology. This coincided with a push to diversify within the oil industry and she was offered a highly sought after position as an able seaman working for Chevron. With this amazing opportunity at her fingertips, Anne did not focus on whether she got the job because she was a woman, she "took the ball and ran with it."

She discovered this type of work was a really good fit for her and she was really good at it. She remained excited by the opportunities waiting for her and worked hard to ensure she was ready for them. After the 1989 Exxon Valdez oil spill, upward mobility within the ranks became increasingly difficult for men and women, and she realized her career had stagnated at second mate, a rank she had held for six years.

In the mid-1990s, the Oregon state legislature noted a lack of women and minorities among state licensed pilots and an apprenticeship program was created to cast a wider net for applicants. This was a break from the long standing tradition of only bringing in new pilots from the towboat captain fleet. Anne was the first woman selected for the apprenticeship program and the first to bring an offshore maritime perspective into a group with predominately inland, "brown water" experience.

At a time when women were just beginning to break through long-standing barriers, Anne said she wasn't focused on that. She said she simply put one foot in front of the other, developed good relationships with her co-workers, and performed her job well.

She admits she was aware that she was under the microscope. There was pressure to perform well and not make any mistakes, but she also understood that she was being provided with more opportunities to prove that anyone can do this job regardless of race or gender.

Anne reflected on how her gender would cause a momentary pause or elicit a comment that a woman was about to take control of their vessel during the five-plus hour transit along the 85 miles of the Columbia and Willamette Rivers. However, once the initial shock wore off, she found that although still curious about her, mariners were less inclined to get into the clash of egos that she had seen happen with her male colleagues. Once they were comfortable with her professional competence, they were generally more respectful and willing to accept her local navigational expertise.

*Lead from ahead, lead from behind, and have the necessary skills to recognize when to use one or the other.*

—Anne McIntyre

Despite the challenges she faced, Anne said she would recommend this career to young women, "but it's not for everyone." She is very active in mentoring young women and men aspiring to become pilots and she is honest with them about the challenges of a maritime career and the difficulties that can arise from balancing a maritime career with family goals. But the passion and excitement she has for her work is palpable to those around her.

She recognizes there is room for improvement in the maritime industry with respect to diversity. She feels strongly that outreach and recruiting needs to begin at a younger age, as young as middle school, so the next generations understand the opportunities within the maritime community, including the benefits of attending a maritime academy.

As a leader in her field, Anne's philosophy is holistic: Lead from ahead, lead from behind, and have the necessary skills to recognize when to use one or the other.

Captain Anne McIntyre, thank you for taking the road less travelled and showing current and future young leaders that anything is possible! 🚢



Captain Anne McIntyre stands on the deck of *Ocean Bloom* with some of the ships' crew members.



## NAVIGATING HER COURSE TO HAPPINESS

# Elizabeth Christman

Captain, Association of Maryland Pilots

by LCDR LESLIE M. DOWNING  
*U.S. Coast Guard*

On a beautiful sunny day in June, Captain Elizabeth Christman stood in the Association of Maryland Pilots building with the dispatch team coordinating her piloting schedule for the next few days. Her infectious vibrant energy was immediately recognizable. More than an interview, the next two hours felt like a TED Talk on how to achieve happiness, how not to settle, and how to live simply in a way that brings peace to your life.

With 23 years of experience as a pilot, Elizabeth, is still living her dream as a maritime professional. While safely navigating bigger-than-ever ships, she ensures the safety of the crews on board, and that of the sensitive and vital Chesapeake Bay. This includes the Port of Baltimore which handled 43 million tons of cargo valued

at \$59.7 billion dollars in 2018, as reported in a March 2019 Transport Topics article.

As the second of three women to achieve the illustrious status of Maryland State Pilot, Elizabeth is nearing the end of her 30-plus year career in the maritime industry, but her vigor and enthusiasm for the job has not faded! "I don't have any regrets," she said. "It's a good life that I lead, and I consider myself very fortunate."

Her career in the maritime industry began with a love of the water. A native of New York, she spent a lot family vacations at the beach, and more time sailing and water skiing in nearby lakes. By the 11th grade, she knew she'd never want a desk job, but a classmate introduced her to the idea of attending a maritime college. Her friend told her that the students go to Europe every summer on a ship. "I thought, 'Wow! This sounds kind of neat,'" she said.

SUNY Maritime College was visiting her high school, and a chance encounter catapulted her toward a life of service on the waterways.

Originally wanting to enter the field of admiralty law, she changed her mind while attending graduate school at SUNY Maritime College. One of her mentors, then-president of SUNY Maritime, retired Navy Rear Admiral Floyd H. Miller, mentioned she should consider achieving something he had not—becoming a pilot. After further conversations with another mentor, she eventually chose to pursue a career as a pilot, eventually turning down an offer to work a shoreside job with a major oil company.

Mentorship has been a staple in her successes as a maritime professional, and in her personal life. She credits, in part, her enthusiasm and willingness to learn with her success.

Elizabeth began her career as a Maryland State Pilot in 1996, achieving senior pilot status after five years of hard work. She said the teamwork she experiences on board the ships is one of the most rewarding parts of her job.

"You learn how to handle ships ... and how to work with crew because you're a part of the bridge team," she said. "My job is to make the master comfortable and





... get the ships safely from the mouth of the bay up to offload cargo without causing environmental damage or safety hazards to the Chesapeake Bay. We take that very seriously!"

After three decades of mastering her craft, she still loves what she does, validating her decision that becoming a pilot would provide her the best quality of life. Every time she completes a job, she walks away knowing she's done a good job.

"I feel good when I shake the master's hand and he says 'thank you, Pilot,'" she said. "There's no greater feeling than that!"

She enjoys immense job satisfaction, but it has not been achieved without its challenges, including the influx of extremely large foreign freight container ships that can be frequently found transiting in and out of the Port of Baltimore. With larger ships, comes the extreme challenge of transiting under bridges with limited air draft.

"You don't realize how close you are until you're standing on the bridge and watch the stack under it and you only have a couple feet, and think, 'Wow! That's close!'"

Elizabeth has had many experiences interacting with crews from all over the world, and those experiences have evolved. Where she was once one of a few women mastering her craft in an elite profession dominated by men, the maritime industry has gotten much more inclusive.

"I don't really hear, oh you're my first lady pilot. I'll hear 'Oh you're my fifth lady pilot.' They always say 'lady pilot' and sometimes call me 'Sir,' and quickly apologize, but I don't worry," she said. "As long as you're putting the rudder the right way, I don't care what you're calling me."

Rarely in her career has she felt she wasn't able to connect with the captain or crew. As far as job descriptions go, she said there's nothing the guys can do physically that she can't do.

However, while serving in her first duty as an officer on board a foreign cruise ship, with about 26 different nationalities on board, she encountered what she described as her hardest leadership experience as a maritime professional. Between the language barriers and gender biases she found it difficult to gain compliance. While docking the ship for the first time she realized the crew was not responding to her commands. The able-bodied crew members just stood around. After multiple occurrences she realized she had to be a bit confrontational and assertive with the crew. She credits that experience with gaining their respect long-term.

"Once you flip them, they are yours forever," she said. "I've learned I don't mind being a little confrontational to get compliance. If you don't speak up, it will not get better for you."

In addition to her exciting career, Elizabeth is an avid traveler and has visited Machu Picchu, Peru, the



A Maryland State Pilot boat breaks through the surf as it delivers a pilot to meet a ship. Photo courtesy of The American Pilots Association

Galapagos Islands, Iceland, and her favorite destination, Italy. In addition to her personal travels, she credits Alaska as being the most beautiful place she's traveled to on a ship. She's transited all of the continents, culminating with her trip to Antarctica in 2008, solidifying her status as a "red noser." This is in addition to her status as a "blue noser," which refers to those mariners who have transited both the Arctic and Antarctic Circle.

While she's not traveling the world or transiting the high seas, she also enjoys golfing and fishing, as she loves adventure and the outdoors.


As a more seasoned mariner, she still takes the time to mentor the younger generation, providing them with nuggets of wisdom whenever she can. With regard to the millennial generation, she emphasized that communication has been the biggest challenge.

"How does the older generation transfer knowledge to the younger generation so they understand? How do you make the connection?" she asked.

She also touts self-care, including stress management. This includes listening to podcasts that bring her peace and calm, maintaining a short commute to the office, and stopping the practice of feeling like you have to completely fill a day. Once believing the busier she was, the happier she was, she realized she needed to step back and do simple things for herself.

"I tried to do as much as I could in a 24-hour period," she said, "but I realized I was setting myself up for failure."

Elizabeth has learned a lot, taught others more, and developed both personally and professionally in ways she never imagined. Yet, she's remained humble and grateful throughout her experiences. "Don't ever look at someone and say they have a better life," she said. "Appreciate the one you have."

That means having no regrets. "You're going to make a lot of decisions as you go on in your life and you've got to keep moving forward," she said, remembering her decision to give up a job with big oil to become a pilot. "Don't do anything if you don't enjoy it. If you don't enjoy doing it, then look for something else that makes you happy because you have a long career ahead of you, and you don't want to be miserable." 



## PIVOT AND STAY THE COURSE

# Kathleen Rathgeber Flury

Captain, Southeast Alaska Pilots Association

by LCDR NICOLE AUTH  
*U.S. Coast Guard*

**F**irst female ship pilot in Alaska, first female president of the Southeast Alaska Pilots Association, first female regional vice president of the American Pilots' Association, and first female staff captain on a U.S.-based cruise ship.

Kathleen Rathgeber Flury grew up in a large, tight-knit family on the south shore of Long Island, New York. She regularly spent time on a lake in Canada at her family's cabin, and cruised the waters of Long Island Sound on their boat. Her father worked in the New York-based office of Holland America Cruise lines and, as a result, her family regularly spent vacations onboard cruise ships.

In 1974, at age 12, one of these cruises made a lasting impression when, Kathleen and her siblings received tours of the cruise ship's bridge and engine room. Once on the bridge, she didn't want to leave. She was fascinated with the operation of the ship, as well as the feeling of being underway, and immediately knew what she wanted to do for the rest of her life.

On the bridge she observed a female third mate performing her duties, clearly demonstrating that her dream was possible. She credits this visibility and early exposure to maritime careers as influencing her decision to attend the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy in Kings Point, New York.

"I never thought about not doing it," she said, "I saw no barriers because we didn't have strict gender roles in our family."

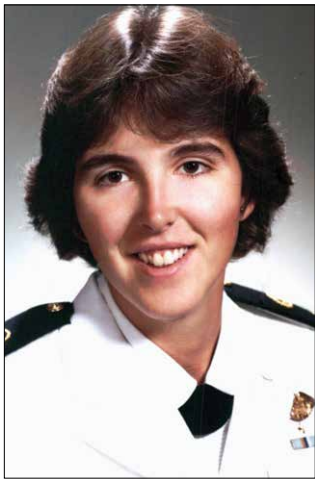
It happened that 1974 was to be the first year women were accepted into the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy, the first service academy to allow women. The academy was a rigorous program and not everyone was keen on the idea of female merchant mariners. Kathleen was immediately interested and, with the full support of her parents and siblings, she was accepted as one of 35 women in the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy's class of 1984.

Her older brother, who had started at the academy just two years before, and one of her father's cousins who had attended also influenced her decision.

Excited to be there, she was eager to get involved in extracurricular activities, in addition to a full course load. This proved too much of a distraction and caused her grades to fall. Despite her best efforts to remain enrolled, she left in November and had to start the process all over. Disappointed, but not discouraged, she quickly started classes at a local community college, obtained positive letters of recommendation from academy upperclassman, and obtained a congressional nomination to attend the next year. She began again with the class of 1985, and the results were much better.

This was her first major test of resilience and it helped her craft a strategy for approaching barriers she employed throughout her career, "Pivot and go around them!" and "Stay the course," she said.

Kathleen was hungry to learn and thrived as a cadet leveraging her positive attitude, hard work, resilience, and passion for a career at sea to help her stay the course. During her cadet sea time, she encountered a chief mate who became a lifelong mentor. He wasn't sure what to call her as the first female cadet he had sailed with and jokingly called her "Gidget" since the male cadets were called "Gadget." She appreciated his honest feedback and guidance, which has served her well. She specifically remembers, "Learn from life, enjoy it, and teach what you learn." While the chief mate's nickname for her may have started as a joke, it endured out of mutual respect and camaraderie. He affectionately referred to her as Gidget until he passed



Kathleen Rathgeber Flury as a Kings Point Midshipmen and years later as a Staff Captain with Royal Caribbean Cruise Lines. Photos courtesy of Kathleen Flury



away. His wife still calls her that to this day.

Upon her 1985 graduation, she set her sights on her next goal, achieving her master of ocean self-propelled vessels of unlimited tonnage, as quickly as possible. Pioneers like Captain Nancy Wagner, class of 1978, showed her it was possible. But sailing jobs were slim and potential employers tried to entice her into taking sales and office jobs.

"I didn't want to work in an office," she said. "It wasn't what I wanted to do."

Staying the course, she took matters into her own

hands. As a third mate, she wrote a letter to Western Cruise Lines to apply for a second mate job. In reply, they offered her a chance to observe, an unpaid position, at her own expense. She took a gamble and bought a one-way ticket to meet the ship in Los Angeles. Once on board, a nurse told her, "Don't even bother unpacking. The last woman here lasted a month." She did not heed the advice, however, and was offered a paid position, remaining on board for an entire year with only three weeks off. The Greek captain of the ship was impressed

Captain Kathleen Rathgeber Flury stands on the back of a pilot boat after taking the NORWEGIAN JOY to sea. Photo courtesy of Southeast Alaska Pilots Association



*Having a female deck officer on board was an oddity.*

*They were accepting once they got to know me.*

—Kathleen Rathgeber Flury

with her drive and desire to learn, and gave her sound advice, “Just do your job.”

Kathleen followed his advice, and did her job so well she accrued enough sea time to achieve her master’s unlimited license in an impressive four and a half years. She continued working her way up the ladder within the cruise industry, accruing as much sea time as possible in 10 years. As the only female deck officer in the entire company, crews were initially hesitant but generally supportive.

“Having a female deck officer on board was an oddity,” she said. “They were accepting once they got to know me.”

In 1990, the Gulf War started and like most conflicts throughout U.S. history, the Merchant Marine was called upon to carry critical Department of Defense cargo to the Middle East. Kathleen sailed as the chief mate on a cargo ship and described the experience as unreal.

“It became real when we saw a scud missile explode nearby and had to put on our gas masks,” she said.

Being so close to a combat zone was unnerving, but definitely one of the most memorable experiences and a memorable moment in her career.

A year later, she had earned the opportunity to sail as a staff captain for Royal Caribbean Cruise Lines, making her the first female staff captain, second-in-command, on a U.S.-based cruise ship, a job she found challenging and extremely rewarding. After her tenure as staff captain, Royal Caribbean didn’t have another female staff captain in the United States for about 10 years, but Flury was encouraged to see more female deck officers, marine pilots, and captains among the ranks each year.

In 1992, she began the arduous, four-year, unpaid pilot training process in the summers, while continuing to work as a staff captain on board cruise ships in the winter months. By 1996, she qualified and was officially licensed as a marine pilot for the state of Alaska, the first woman to do so, and she enjoyed her new role, with Southeast Alaska Pilots’ Association.

“Being underway is the best part of the job, so being a pilot is the fun stuff without as many distractions.”

Specifically, she pointed to the robust mentoring


program and family atmosphere of the Southeast Alaska Pilots. “This particular group of pilots has a lot of camaraderie,” she said. “It’s like a big family, and you have the unique opportunity to know and learn from each other because we spend several days underway together.”

During this time, she was recruited by the Alaska Coastwise Pilots, which merged with the Southeast Alaska Pilots Association in 2002.

Kathleen has held various leadership positions within the Alaska Coastwise Pilots and Southeast Alaska Pilots Association throughout her impressive 23-year career as an Alaskan pilot. In 2017, she was elected president of the Southeast Alaska Pilots Association and as the regional vice president of the American Pilots Association in 2018, and was the first female to hold both positions. When asked how we can continue increasing the number of women in leadership positions in the maritime industry, she said, “Women’s conferences, outreach, and mentoring increase visibility and exposure, which help bring more women into the maritime field.” She strongly believes, much like her initial experience on board a cruise ship at age 12, “If [women] can see it, they can be it.”

She also cited the importance of positive role models like Wagner who demonstrated the possibilities, and strong mentors and allies like the chief mate during her cadet years who provided honest feedback.

Throughout her career, she has been an example of resilience, perseverance, and lifelong learning. If that wasn’t enough, she offered sound advice to those considering a career in the maritime industry. “Don’t be afraid to ask for help. Everyone has something to offer,” she said. Never stop listening, learning, and adapting.”

Thank you Captain Kathleen Flury for staying the course, and showing us it is possible. 



Captain Kathleen Rathgeber Flury on the bridge. Photo courtesy of Southeast Alaska Pilots Association





## MARITIME EXECUTIVES

*I strongly encourage maritime executives to champion initiatives that increase the percentage of women in the maritime workforce. A diverse and inclusive workforce is essential to the vitality of the maritime industry. As leaders, we must make a concerted effort to recruit and retain women who provide unique perspectives and bring valuable talents to the maritime profession. I thank everyone who answers this call to action, and especially those who have already focused their attention on increasing the number of women in their maritime organizations—at all levels, and in all roles.*

—Elaine Chao  
Secretary, Department of Transportation



## CELEBRATE THE VICTORIES

# Barbara Melvin

Chief Operating Officer, South Carolina Ports Authority

by ELIZABETH TAVOLARO  
*U.S. Coast Guard*

In the brand new South Carolina Ports Authority building in Mount Pleasant, South Carolina, Barbara Melvin introduces herself. She's the chief operating officer for the South Carolina Ports Authority (SCPA), a prestigious leadership position. If there is anything happening within the SCPA, she has a hand in it. Which is a great responsibility, considering the \$53 billion in annual economic impact that the Ports Authority brings to the state. So, how does a woman with a background in government relations become part of the executive management team for the SCPA?

"I didn't intend to get into the maritime industry," Barbara said. "It happened after moving on to the [Charleston Harbor Deepening Project]."

Born and raised in Georgia, she earned her bachelor's degree in political science from Georgia Southern University. After working for the Georgia governor's office, she moved to South Carolina and took a job serving as the director of government relations for the Charleston Metro Chamber of Commerce. It was in 1998 that she took her first job with the SCPA working in government relations. Never stopping, she continued to



Barbara Melvin in the Port of Charleston. Photo courtesy of the South Carolina Ports Authority



move up within the SCPA, working in external affairs, operations and terminals, and finally, chief operating officer. She never anticipated a career in the maritime industry but when that opportunity arose, she accepted.

That opportunity is one she considers both her biggest accomplishment and her most difficult challenge in the industry. Barbara has been part of the Charleston Harbor Deepening Project from the beginning, continually serving as team leader while performing her duties as chief operating officer, and plans to see it through to completion in 2021. She speaks with great passion about the project, describing it as “very rewarding.”

It is apparent in the way she speaks of the project that she is incredibly proud of the work being done and the role she has played in making it a reality. And it’s no wonder! Charleston Harbor has seen rapid growth over the years, even being listed as one of the top 10 U.S. ports. By increasing the harbor depth from 45 feet to 52 feet, it will effectively make Charleston the deepest harbor on the East Coast. Giving the port the ability to accommodate larger ships and allow more cargo carrying capacity to and from the area. This, along with the new terminal being built, will give the Port of Charleston the capability to handle 18,000 TEU container ships.

Barbara quickly learned the difficulties of navigating through the different organizations for approvals while managing a project of that scale. She had to correspond with many federal, state, and local government agencies. The job demands a great team leader, and she had no issues rising to the occasion.

“You need diverse leadership qualities to relate to your team,” she said.

The ability to listen, collaborate, be decisive and intelligent, take risks, encourage, challenge, comfort, and reward are all leadership qualities she employs. But she also sees herself as very lucky to have such a capable team.

“I have the most talented team who gave me a shot at being a leader,” Barbara said. “[They were] welcoming and so professional, that we all gelled as a team within a year.”

In such a fast-paced position, she is constantly engaged with customers, and frequently travels overseas. With such a busy schedule, she recognizes that being able to trust her team is invaluable.

She said her greatest fault is avoiding the urge to be a fixer and jump in and solve problems when she sees them.

“I stop myself every day and let my team solve problems,” she said, citing restraint as another key to being a successful team leader.

Beyond team building and project success, Barbara believes risk taking and a general attitude of thinking outside the box will help bring more diversity to the maritime industry as a whole.

“Diversity isn’t just women, it’s ages and cultures” she said. “If we focus on technology, it will bring the diversity.”

## *Diversity isn’t just women, it’s ages and cultures.*

—Barbara Melvin

She offers working on a terminal, a physically demanding job, as one example. Getting away from 9-to-5 thinking, offering more workplace flexibility, moving freight in non-peak hours and other innovations can help not only women, but keep others in the workforce as well. New hours and new technology, will be the key to supporting diversification.

Despite all of her accomplishments, Barbara does admit there is one thing she would differently if she had the chance—complete a minor in finance, though it’s a minor regret.

“To be successful in business, you have to know the numbers,” she said, explaining that to make a positive contribution in a management team you need to be able to speak intelligently with the chief financial officer.

It is apparent that education is very important to her. She said her most rewarding experience was completing her executive master’s in business administration in global supply chain from the University of Tennessee. This degree was useful in the operations side of the business, training her in dealing with shippers and what a shipper needs to feel confident using a port.

While the lack of a finance minor might have been a minor obstacle in her career, she never felt that way about being a woman in a male-dominated industry.

“No, absolutely not,” she said, adding that women always question whether or not they can do the job, while men don’t entertain those doubts.

That matter-of-fact attitude is an obvious key to her success.

“I’m decisive and I require that of our team,” she said.

Jim Newsome, CEO and president of SCPA, who Barbara sees as a mentor in her 21 years at the organization, recognized the importance of her tenacity as well. Newsome was the man who recognized how well someone with a government relations background could excel in an operator position.

“He rewards people who know how to get to yes,” Barbara said. “No is the easy answer. Yes is the difficult one.”

It’s no surprise that Barbara’s personal mantra is, “celebrate the victories.

“[It’s] human nature ... to focus on things that went wrong, when in reality 95 percent of things went right and only 5 percent went wrong,” she said. “So let’s focus on what went right.”



## PIONEERING A BRIGHT FUTURE

# Bethann Rooney

Deputy Director, Port Authority of New York & New Jersey

by LT REBECCA BLANCHFLOWER  
*U.S. Coast Guard*

**B**ethann Rooney. She had already been accepted to a college and paid her deposit when she met a few students from the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy who exposed her to the idea of sailing and exploring the sea and its lore. This twist of fate led the once aspiring accountant, now 28-year veteran of the maritime industry, to her current position as the port department deputy director of the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, the nation's third largest seaport. Bethann has spoken in front of Congress numerous times, has written legislative documents resulting in regulations, and is a recognized world leader on maritime security and emergency response. She is also the originator of the

Port's Council on Port Performance, something that has been replicated in ports all over the nation.

Drawn to the State University of New York (SUNY) Maritime College for its prospect of traveling, Bethann took every opportunity to train on ships. She not only spent the three required summers onboard the training ship *Empire State*, but she also spent her four winters at school as a cadet observer on commercial ships. It was during those ship rides that she fell in love with the maritime industry. She earned her Bachelor of Science in business administration/marine transportation from SUNY Maritime College in 1991, but due to unforeseen circumstances was unable to go underway

on a ship. Staying as close to the industry as possible, she earned a role as a vessel agent for the General Steamship Corporation. In that role she managed all of the logistics and requirements for ships arriving in the Port of New York and New Jersey. For three years she coordinated the required pilots and tugs, arranged the provisions and any necessary repairs, and organized the supply, transfer, and handling of cargo.

In 1993, Bethann was interviewing for a job in the World Trade Center when the north tower was bombed. Following that terrorist attack, she joined the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey (PANYNJ) and has since held a number of management positions. She worked as an operations representative and senior transportation planner before she was recruited by her mentor, Lillian Barone, to move to their headquarters and become the senior port technology planner responsible for intermodal and technology planning. Barone was the






director of the PANYNJ and saw something in Bethann that not even Bethann saw in herself. She recognized that her senior port technology planner was a leader in port management and an innate problem solver. Bethann was brought on to work on emerging issues facing the port due to congestion, the worst in its history. The supply chain became so inefficient that roadways were blocked with trucks transporting cargo from the ships. She broke down issues across every level, from truck drivers and longshoreman, to commercial shipping. She researched, developed, and implemented emerging marine and port-related information and infrastructure technologies which made the port more efficient, productive, and cost efficient.

On September 11, 2001, Bethann was in Washington, speaking before the Port Readiness Committee when the World Trade Center was attacked. Returning to New York the following morning, the PANYNJ director greeted her with, "You are in charge of security." For 14 years Bethann was the general manager of port security in New York and New Jersey. She took on this role, which had not previously existed, and soon became a recognized global expert in port security and global response. She authored and implemented policies, procedures, plans and directives to prevent, deter, detect, and recover from a disaster. The most recognizable of these efforts being legislation that led to the Maritime Transportation Security Act. She influenced the requirements and drove FEMA and the Coast Guard to adopt a port-wide strategic risk-management process. With its critical infrastructure, and daily passenger and cargo transits, the Port of New York and New Jersey is one of the largest security targets in the country. Bethann prepared successful federal grants and managed implementation of selected projects valued at more than \$40 million for security measures to safeguard this critical port.

"Bethann Rooney has been a staple here and is responsible for many of the improvements and achievements of the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey," CDR Nicolette Vaughan, the former prevention department head at Coast Guard Sector New York said.

During her tenure as general manager of port security, she received two U.S. Coast Guard Meritorious Team Commendations, two U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Meritorious Public Service Awards, two DHS Distinguished Public Service Awards, the highest award a civilian can receive, and the U.S. Department of Transportation 9-11 Medal. The PANYNJ also received the inaugural Port Authority of the Year Rear Admiral Richard E. Benis Award for Excellence in Maritime Security.

In 2014, she moved into the role of PANYNJ assistant director where she continued to resolve complex operational issues. She coordinated the "Big Ship Readiness Program" in preparation for the arrival of the port's first Ultra Large Container Vessel, timed with the completion of the Bayonne Bridge Navigation Clearance Project. She created the Ports Council on Port Performance, which is the first of its kind forum allowing port stakeholders to work collaboratively on projects of common interest to make the port more efficient and productive. This forum has been replicated throughout the nation.

Recently, the Port Authority named Bethann the Ports Department's deputy director, but 28 years ago she was boarding her first commercial ship as a cadet, the only female amongst 26 males. She did not view herself as the lone female needing to be coddled, but as an individual with value. She is now an award-winning, distinguished expert in her field of port operations, facility management, safety and security, and strategic planning. Her commitment to public service and passion for the maritime industry has not only improved safety, security, and port operation in New York and New Jersey, but across the globe. 

A super ultra large container vessel enters the port of New York. Photo Courtesy of The Port Authority of New York and New Jersey





EXPECT THE UNEXPECTED

# Alexandra Anagnostis-Irons

President & Founder, Total Marine Solutions

by LCDR LAURA GOULD  
*U.S. Coast Guard*

A South Florida native, Alexandra Anagnostis-Irons, president and founder of Total Marine Solutions (TMS), attended Barry University in Miami Shores, Florida, where she earned a bachelor's degree and an MBA in accounting. Upon graduation, she got a job at one of the then "Big 8" accounting firms. It didn't take long to realize working for a cruise line, a job she held in college, was to be her calling. Three months after she had left the cruise line to work for the "Big 8" firm, she called her previous boss and asked to return.

Her introduction to the maritime industry was pure happenstance. Shortly after graduating from high school, her two older siblings were still in college and she was asked to take one of the athletic scholarships awarded to her and complete her first two years locally. Money was tight at home so her mother also encouraged her daughter to get a part time job to help pay for books. She went to a temp agency to find that the first, and only, placement was to a company called Bahamas Cruise Line (BCL) as a purchasing agent.

Soon thereafter, Alexandra's father passed away unexpectedly. She considers herself incredibly fortunate as the person she was reporting to, BCL's Paul Grant, saw something in her and helped strengthen her work ethic and focus, allowing her to work full time while going to school. He would also take the time to teach the small group—seven people shore side, supporting the entire operation of three ships—technical and marine operations, hotel operations, crewing, gift shops, and procurement for everything onboard except casino operations. It was intense, but as Alexandra's first "real" job out of high school, she didn't know any better and was hooked immediately. Grant mentored her while creating a family-type work environment, which helped with what was going on in her life, and laying the groundwork for her future career, a career within the cruise industry. That career continued to develop until she left Royal Caribbean Cruises Ltd. in September 2000 to start TMS. She was the director of technical and new build purchasing for the cruise line when she left.

She founded TMS at a time when the cruise line industry had become involved in the first environmental

compliance program administered by the Department of Justice. She identified a need for services for vessel operators and the companies that supplied environmental compliance systems. She had not intended to pursue a maritime industry career, but reflected that life will take you where you are meant to be, though it may not be where you expected. "We are exactly where we are meant to be but never where we planned to be," she said.

## Team work

Alexandra said there have been a number of incidents where a team she was part of had to work together to fix something that had gone terribly wrong. For example, getting passengers home safely from a vessel that had to be beached due to a navigational mistake and then working to get that ship repaired over three long months.

She said her most rewarding experience was when she started Total Marine Solutions in 2000. She feared whether she would be respected as a business owner in the maritime industry and be given the opportunity to support the operation of ships as she had enjoyed had years before.

"Had I built a reputation which would command respect, or was it the logo and company name on my business card which opened those doors?" she wondered. "I was relieved when my reputation and past successes were recognized as just that—mine—and not credited to the organization for which I worked."

Being recognized in the maritime industry as a valuable partner in ensuring environmental compliance continues to fuel what TMS does. To be called upon by clients who were once her colleagues, and who ask Alexandra for her opinion, is a rewarding feeling and one which extends to the TMS team.

## A Changing Career Field

The maritime industry has definitely evolved over the past decades. Many more doors are opening for women, especially when we consider how ships have evolved. We have seen an increase in female cadets entering the engineering programs within the military academies, while at the same time, more and more are showing interest in



the business of running ships. She said it is refreshing to see such enthusiasm. "I would certainly encourage a female family member or close friend to consider the maritime industry when determining the course of their career," she said.

### **Barriers That Weren't**

Alexandra credits not feeling impacted by barriers to working for an organization with a true leader at the helm, someone who continually tapped into everyone's skill set and pushed them to do more. "That being said, there were instances where not having a formal maritime education put me at a slight disadvantage," she said. "My background was in finance and international business, so I realized early on how important it is to understand the needs and expectations of those onboard running the vessels." She also learned what demonstrating this respect and understanding would allow her, and subsequently, the teams she would lead, to effectively support the fleet and be accepted by those shipboard and shore side.

While her on-the-job training and experience affords her a seat at some important tables, she said formal training would perhaps have played a key role in getting to some milestones earlier.

She did encounter some challenges as the president of WISTA and one of the greatest was figuring out how to get their organizations—their supervisors—to commit resources and support involvement in WISTA. While many will readily approve the request from a male employee to attend a golf tournament, the value of industry events developed or supported by WISTA is often not grasped or appreciated, Alexandra said, adding that it really boggles her mind at times, "especially when you consider the program and participants at WISTA events."

### **Navigation Points**

Alexandra said her mentor, Paul Grant, impressed upon her a number of sound and ethical work habits that stick with her today, including:

- Be consistent! When people know what to expect, trust is developed.
- Don't allow your emotions to get the best of you. (Still working on that!)
- Expect the unexpected. Don't be surprised with what is presented to you—just figure out how to manage it—and figure it out quickly and with confidence.


In turn, she offers women considering a maritime career her own take on the situation. "Just Do It!" she said. "Taking risks is when it gets interesting and when we really grow. Find the thrill in that, make certain to identify and learn and grow from your mistakes, own them, and keep plowing forward!"

While the "Just Do It!" approach works when contemplating whether to pursue a maritime career, making that career successful takes strategy.

"The maritime industry is one of the most incredible career paths! Join organizations, such as WISTA, as early on as you can," she said. "Become part of supportive 'communities' when it comes to associations you decide to join. They will help you grow personally and professionally and expand your network tenfold.

"WISTA has been an important part of my career since I joined 15 years ago," she noted. "It has strengthened my professional network in ways I never would have imagined. More importantly, I have developed friendships which will last my lifetime."

But perhaps the most important thing to remember for any career, and Alexandra Anagnostis-Irons' personal mantra, is this: Consistency is key!

Alexandra continues serving on WISTA's board, is an active board member with the Seafarer's House at Port Everglades, as well as serving as vice-chair of Broward Navy Days, and as a proud Coast Guard Foundation Trustee. 





## THE WOMAN IN THE ARENA

# Lois Zabrocky

President & Chief Executive Officer, International Seaways

by LT MEGAN COOK FALCO  
*U.S. Coast Guard*

**L**ois Zabrocky. The maritime industry is notorious for its competitive, fast-paced, turbulent nature. Lois Zabrocky grew up on a dairy farm in the Midwest, so how did she become a leading figure shattering glass ceilings in the maritime industry? She is the president and CEO of International Seaways, one of the largest tanker companies in the world. The impressive fleet comprises 47 vessels of varying sizes. The company also has ownership interests in four liquefied natural gas carriers and two floating storage and offloading service vessels.

Her path to sea began after heeding a call for adventure, and after her older brother became a midshipman at the United States Merchant Marine Academy, Kings Point.

“My brother shipped out for sea year [and] experienced exotic countries and it opened up the world for him,” she said. “He didn’t have to do much selling for me to head to Kings Point.”

There, Midshipman Lois Zabrocky discovered she was definitely in the minority. Women made up only about 10 percent of the corps. Upon graduation, Third Mate Zabrocky worked on a U.S. chemical tanker where she was the only female on-board. However, she recalls this work with fondness.

“Being the only woman on board just meant keeping more to yourself,” she said. “But all the tanker officers were very hard working professionals. All about the job.”

After her time at sea, she joined Overseas Shipholding Group (OSG). While the number of women in the company has increased dramatically since she began in 1992, she was the first woman hired in the chartering department and one of only a few women in the workforce—including the customer base.

“Initially, my colleagues were skeptical,” she said. “Once I earned their respect, we were a great team.”

This was evident through her promotion in 2005. Her success continued and she was selected for promotion again to senior vice president of OSG in 2008 and chief commercial officer of the international flag strategic business unit in 2011.

In the Coast Guard, there has been a surge of interest in women’s retention, and Lois upholds the same is true for the maritime industry

“It has become more open-minded over the years,” she said. “I can’t imagine working as many hours as we did 20 years ago, man or woman. There was a sense of bravado that abounded. If you weren’t up to the 24/7 trading





pace, constant travel, and endless lunches and dinners, you fell off the path to success.

"I made sure that I met and surpassed what the guys put in. Shipping is still an intense business, but there is room now for the recognition of humanity," she added. "At some point in every person's career, they will have a sick partner, parent, or child, and they will have to ask for help from the team to get to the finish line. It is this type of supportive culture that makes a company worth investing your time in."

Even if progress may seem slow at times, women are becoming more and more present in the industry and have increasingly visible positions.

Navigating the paths of a work environment with a never-ending high-op tempo can burn out even the most motivated worker. For Lois's career, however, mentors and role models proved an important component.

"I have had a collection of informal mentors and leaders that took interest in developing me and that I emulated over the years," she said. "Never take it for granted when someone with experience takes the time to teach you, it is a gift."

Family planning is an added stress for many women who are embarking on a career in the maritime industry, whether land or sea based, but Lois is proof that it can be done, and done well. "Career and family are tricky," she said. "Early on, I had a wonderful live-in nanny, who is now a close friend, because well...day care closes at a fairly early hour. Eventually, my husband, a ship captain,

retired and now makes the house run smoothly."

International Seaways' predecessor company, OSG, reorganized five years ago after a tumultuous period and split into two companies—OSG, a Jones Act and barge company, and International Seaways. Lois, a true champion of the company, persevered through the uneasy and tense period with a renewed sense of worth. That new worth came with new opportunities. Lois has been a director of International Seaways since May 2018 and has since become the president and CEO of the organization.

"The tanker business is defined by cycles. No matter how aware of this you are, the down turn is always long and punishing," she said. "The reorganization was brutal but we made it through, but not without scars. My favorite mantra became 'The Man in the Arena' [a speech by Theodore Roosevelt]."

Lois Zabrocky is, without a doubt, the "Woman in the Arena," and her path to success proved that while there will be obstacles along the way, hard work, dedication, and perseverance will lead you to success. While at the helm of International Seaways, she has seen the company through acquisitions and strategic expansions while remaining an inspirational leader who "walks the walk."

This is evident through her company's philosophy: Every day, International Seaways' mission is to exceed its customers' expectations. We know that every stakeholder is a customer. We do this by understanding our customers' needs, and by understanding our own business and challenging ourselves to constantly seek improvement. ■

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*It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs, who comes short again and again, because there is no effort without error and shortcoming; but who does actually strive to do the deeds; who knows great enthusiasms, the great devotions; who spends himself in a worthy cause; who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who neither know victory nor defeat.*

—Theodore Roosevelt



ASK FOR THE JOBS YOU WANT!

# Susan Hayman

Retired Chief Executive Officer, Foss Maritime

by LT ALEXANDRA MILLER  
*U.S. Coast Guard*

Commander Susan Hayman, U.S. Naval Reserves, Retired. How did a woman from a small, agricultural town in upstate New York end up in the maritime industry? Answer: A Superintendent of Schools, also a retired Army Reserve colonel with a long, proud record of having at least one graduate every year attend a service academy.

Susan Hayman grew up in Brownville, where she started her senior year in the fall of 1975, unsure where she wanted to go to college or what she wanted to study. Her superintendent, unable to persuade any of the men in her class to attend a service academy, gathered the eligible women of her class in an attempt to talk them into applying. This was the first year all five federal service academies would be accepting woman.



“The military is not for me,” Susan remembers telling him. He told her about the Merchant Marine Academy. She did not have to be in the military, she could be in the Merchant Marine. She knew nothing of the Merchant Marine or the maritime industry, but the thought of seeing the world, and nearly free tuition, enticed her to join the third coed class at the Merchant Marine Academy.

Although taken by surprise by their military indoctrination period and the military structure, she quickly adapted to life at the Merchant Marine Academy. After graduating with a Bachelor of Science in marine transportation in 1980, she accepted a job as a third mate with Exxon Shipping Company.

For Susan, learning to overcome gender stereotypes started with her first job. While sailing on tankers, she noticed captains would often be hesitant to accept her skills and experience, unlike her male counterparts. She developed a plan of attack that she would use throughout her career.

“My theory was that if I did a good job and worked hard, there would be more acceptance for the next women,” she said. “It doesn’t happen overnight. It is a long-term progression of changing attitudes. Experience is what you get right after you need it.”

After four years of sailing and a looming economic downturn, she began looking for opportunities to broaden her maritime career base. She thought if she was going ashore than she needed an MBA to provide her the best opportunities. Susan applied to one business school, Harvard, from which she graduated with her MBA in 1986.

Upon earning her MBA, Susan took a brief detour from the maritime industry, and accepted a job at CSX, which had just purchased Sea-Land. She was attracted to the idea of CSX’s vision to be a true intermodal shipping company. Her maritime background and education made her a perfect fit for a railroad company that had just purchased a shipping company. But later accepted a position at Matson, working in operations, eventually becoming the area manager for Southern California. She then accepted a position with APL as the director of terminal operations and was promoted to vice president.

Parallel to Susan’s civilian maritime career, was her



career as a Navy Reserve Officer. In 2002, she was the vice president of security at APL. At the time, she was in the Navy's Individual Ready Reserve, never expected to drill again, and no longer owned a uniform. In response to the 9/11 terrorist attacks, she was recalled to active duty. While she reflected about her call to duty and positive experience in the Navy Reserve, she also reflected on how this year-long deployment changed her career path.

"I was on a really good career track staying on the operational side of the business, when I got recalled. I do not regret my time on active duty, as it was a time when our country needed reservists to serve and I was proud to answer the call," she said. "However, when I was discharged, my former position had been filled and since it was difficult to find a suitable new position, I decided to leave. When I accepted a job at Foss, I was on the staff side. It was not the career path I envisioned for myself before I was recalled. You just have to start over again in some ways."

Susan took some consulting jobs before accepting the job with Foss. She felt consulting was a way to try out something new when you are looking for a career change or have to make a career change.

"Your resume starts to get old quickly and you are only as good as your last job. It is the same as someone who takes a break from their career to have children, for illness, or take care of families. It is harder to get back on track, especially in industries like ours where you have a definite career track. When you are in an organization like a shipping company, there is a hierarchy, a career path, and boxes you have to tick. Consulting allowed me to explore the jobs I ultimately did not want, which is just as important as knowing the jobs I wanted."

She accepted a position at Foss Maritime as the vice president of health, safety, quality, environment and external affairs. There, she had the most difficult leadership challenge of her career: company cultural change.

"Leading a company to develop a strong safety culture takes a multi-faceted approach and is a journey that never ends," she said. "However, focusing on the continuous improvement aspects and the progress and successes along the path help to maintain focus and motivation. I believe one of the keys to overcoming these cultural issues is effective communication through all levels of the organization."

Reflecting on her career, she only has one regret, that she never developed a career plan with goals or milestones for herself. "My career was more a serendipitous series of jobs rather than a well thought out career path," she said. "If I could do anything differently, I would have taken more control over my own career and fought for positions

*Certainly, there are more women in the industry both afloat and ashore, which is a good thing. However, I have been disappointed that so few women actually make it into the C-Suite.*

*Although there are cracks, there is no doubt a glass ceiling still exists.*

—Susan Hayman

I was qualified to hold, as well as for gender pay equality."

While she sees that the industry has evolved with regard to women, she feels it is still lagging.


"Certainly, there are more women in the industry both afloat and ashore, which is a good thing. However, I have been disappointed that so few women actually make it into the C-Suite," she said. "Although there are female captains and chief engineers, there are fewer than I would have expected during the time I have been in the industry. Although there are cracks, there is no doubt a glass ceiling still exists."

For companies to improve diversity, her background in quality systems showed through. "I believe diversity needs to be a strategic goal with actionable objectives and measurable milestones," she said. "Diversity should not just be a talking point or wishful thinking that [it] will just happen organically. Companies need to have a plan for improving diversity including recruitment and, perhaps more importantly, retention of qualified individuals."

While career paths towards advancement afloat tend to be clearer, she thinks women need to have a plan for their career path ashore for advancement and not be afraid to actively work toward that plan.

"Women need to ask for the jobs they want! What's the worst that can happen?" she asked, but added one last thought. "A guiding principle for me was never turn down a job, especially if it is a promotion."

Work with your supervisor to get the jobs you need to get promoted. Susan did not have a specific mentor but said working at a company that recognized talent and having supervisors that discussed career options with her aided in her career advancement.

She retired from Foss Maritime in 2017. In 2018, she retired from the Navy Reserve with the rank of commander and is currently enjoying her retirement in Malta and traveling to new places. 



# Christine Duffy, Lisa Lutloff-Perlo, Jan Swartz

Chief Executives for Carnival, Celebrity & Princess Cruise Lines

by SARAH KENNEDY  
*Cruise Lines International Association*

In 2017 alone, the cruise industry made a positive impact on communities worldwide by sustaining 1,108,676 jobs equaling \$45.6 billion in wages and salaries and \$134 billion total output.<sup>1</sup>

At the center of the cruise industry, there is a little recognized phenomenon contributing to the rising popularity and success of cruising: Female leadership. In the last decade, countless women have risen to senior leadership in a variety of roles across the industry.

Due to an old nautical superstition that a female presence would anger the sea gods and bring bad luck, women were historically forbidden to sail on military vessels or merchant ships and were certainly not welcome on the bridge. Fast forward to the present, female-centered leadership is now a mainstay in the cruise industry, and a prestigious group of talented and driven women lead diverse teams spanning the maritime and hospitality industries.

From the hundreds of Cruise Line Industry Association-Certified travel agents to the presidents, CEOs, and top executives at cruise lines, the global cruise industry has embraced female leadership. Currently, women constitute between 18 and 20 percent of the cruise industry workforce, and up to 22 percent<sup>2</sup> of cruise ship officers in a given cruise line are women.

Across the United States, women are leading the industry forward and with good reason. These powerful leaders show adaptability in an ever-changing industry; a passion and authenticity for the task at hand; customer empathy; and a keen ability to handle the multiple challenges the global maritime and travel industries present at any given time. In fact, three of the world's top cruise lines are currently overseen by dynamic females adhering to this style of leadership—Christine Duffy, president of Carnival Cruise Line; Lisa Lutloff-Perlo, president and CEO of Celebrity Cruises, a Royal Caribbean brand; and Jan Swartz, president of Princess Cruises.

## Women on the Waves

Led by President Christine Duffy since 2015, Carnival

Cruise Line employs more than 40,000 people shoreside and across 26 ships. Leading the iconic brand allows Duffy to follow her love for the ocean, her deep expertise in the travel industry, and her passion for working with her team creating memorable vacations for more than 5.2 million guests annually.

Christine's mother and her family are from France. From an early age she had the privilege and opportunity to travel the world, and the passion to make travel her career. She started as a travel agent and eventually worked her way to leadership roles. With 30 years of travel experience under her belt, prior to joining Carnival, Christine was named the first female president of Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA), the official trade association for the global cruise industry. She also serves on the Partner Advisory Board of one of Carnival's favorite charities, St. Jude Children's Research Hospital.

In 2014, Lisa Lutloff-Perlo, president and CEO of Celebrity Cruises, became the first woman to run a cruise line publicly traded on the New York Stock Exchange. A champion for diversity in the cruise industry, she has developed initiatives to recruit more women to shipboard leadership roles, and has also nurtured a corporate culture of innovation and attention to detail. In fact, she leads Royal Caribbean Cruises Ltd.'s Global Marine Organization and ensures its \$30 billion fleet of 46 ships runs at top efficiency and safety, elevating not just the Celebrity brand but Royal Caribbean as a whole.

Raised in the small fishing town of Gloucester, Massachusetts, Lisa never dreamed she would have a career in cruising. Growing up in Gloucester, nearly everyone made their living by going out to sea, so she finds it serendipitous to have landed in the industry. She was offered a job as a cruise vacation advisor 35 years ago. A year later she came across a position in sales at Royal Caribbean Cruises Ltd., earned the job, and the rest is history.

As president of Princess Cruises, Jan Swartz leads the third largest cruise line in the world, overseeing a global cruise and tour company with a fleet of 18 modern



ships that carry 1.8 million passengers annually. She guides the company's more than 28,000 people globally and operates in more than 60 countries as part of Carnival Corporation & PLC.

Following college, she began her career at Boston-based Bain & Company focusing on consumer products and service with an impressive client roster that included major brands like American Express, Nestle, and later Princess Cruises. After taking the initiative and reaching out to Princess to see if she could work with them directly, Jan began her official cruise industry career in strategic planning and business development, a position created specifically for her. Working with Princess, mixed with perhaps a genetic passion for the sea—her grandfather was a naval architect—she developed a love of the cruise business.

### **All Channels Lead to Cruising**

Christine originally hoped to be a flight attendant, but her height ended that dream. Flight attendants had to be at least 5-foot,4 inches. An alternative path turned out to be the perfect position for the land-lubber turned sea-lover. While working as a travel agent, she took her first cruise on her honeymoon in 1981 and 35 years later, she became the president of the world's largest cruise line. She is proud to work with a talented and dynamic global team that strives toward a common goal of helping fulfill every traveler's vacation dreams. "Don't let others define your career choices. There is no one path to success, everyone has their own journey. I'm a perfect example of that. Who knows what would have happened if I became a flight attendant," Christine said.

Lisa spent 17 years in various progressive sales positions, setting a career goal of becoming head of sales. That all changed in 2001, when she was moved to a marketing position. At the time, she thought her career path had been pushed off track and nearly ruined. In hindsight, she said it was the best thing to ever happen to her. "Sometimes it pays to veer off your path," she said. "It may lead you to places you never thought you would get to." Her time in the variety of roles during her ladder-climbing 34-year tenure with Royal Caribbean Cruises Ltd., prepared her for the executive seat.

Not every journey to the cruise industry has the same itinerary, but they all have the same destination. Though each may have known they had a passion for travel, not



*Sometimes it pays to veer off your path. It may lead you to places you never thought you would get to.*

—Christine Duffy

every cruise executive expected to see themselves leading the sea-going charge. Jan's passion and drive have helped her blend a personal and professional passion for travel. She counts herself fortunate to be a key leader in helping millions of people discover the wonders of the world and inspiring a deeper love of travel around the globe.

"I love [that] the cruise industry helps tens of millions of people create lasting memories with those they love in places of great beauty," Jan said. "I believe it supports economic development around the world and builds cultural understanding between nations."

## A Smart Strategy

Christine knows for working women passion is strength and a sense of community is essential. She said being passionate and getting deeply involved in a given industry, and the causes it supports, is vital for success.



*You can't do it alone, and you can't count on people noticing how terrific you are. You've got to work it!*

—Lisa Perlo-Lutoff

Additionally, finding people to admire, who may be willing to share experiences and advice, can serve as a vital guide when working one's way up and realizing full potential. She also believes making mistakes and having to navigate through difficult experiences creates an

opportunity for tremendous learning and can teach determination, resiliency, and professional commitment.

Lisa believes in "asking for what you want." She feels women do not do that enough. In addition to excellence in her work, she credits volunteering for special projects, networking with executives throughout the company, and putting herself front and center for her success. She notes that simply excelling won't gain females the prominence needed to move to the next level. Visibility, accessibility, and self-promotion are part of the equation.

Every successful executive needs a smart strategy and the drive to see their vision through to fruition. When it comes to helping ambitious women gain prominence in their position, teamwork is crucial. Jan stepped up to the activities she was personally and best suited for, and delegated to draw on the strengths and capabilities of every team member.

## Role Models of Every Gender

When it comes to inspiration and admiration, these top female execs draw from a wealth of diverse sources. Christine credits two role models with continuing to inspire her. She looks up to Mary Barra, chairman and CEO of General Motors, and the first female CEO of a major global automaker, for her knack of always creating an inclusive environment where employees feel they can voice their opinions. She

has also modeled her leadership style after Barra's ability to listen to her team and her general approachability, as it helps to cultivate leaders within an organization and foster a culture of engaged and motivated employees.

Her role models are not only women. She also credits Carnival Corporation CEO Arnold Donald as being a huge inspiration. She lists his passion for learning and connecting with his employees, and his genuine caring nature for his team as inspiration. After he asked her to serve as president of Carnival Cruise Line, she gained an even deeper



appreciation for him, his dedication to the cruise industry, drive to exceed guests' expectations, and how he manages enormous responsibility.

Lisa believes the United States Women's National Soccer Team members are role models for her and all women. Their unwavering drive played a key factor in their success on the field, and their work off the field is just as important, as they represent diversity and equality for all, she said.

"These women give me hope for the future as they have unified our country in a way we need it, at a time we need it," she said. "They inspire me to always bring my A-game."

She also looks up to Richard Fain, chairman and chief executive officer of Royal Caribbean Cruises, Ltd. He has been her role model since the day she met him. She considers him an innovator, a risk taker, a man who believes in the future, and most importantly, a man of tremendous integrity who always stands for and does the right thing.

Jan's are a little closer to home. She credits her parents with teaching her the importance of integrity, the value of hard work, and the courage to chase her dreams in the spirit of service to others. Combined, these qualities have contributed immensely to her success. She also feels fortunate to count cruise industry colleagues like Micky Arison, Arnold Donald, Stein Kruse, Alan Buckelew, Peter Ratcliffe, David Dingle, Ann Sherry, Christine Duffy, Rick Meadows, and the fresh perspectives of new talent like Orlando Ashford, among her greatest inspirations.

### **Continuing a Wave of Change**

One common thread these women share, among many, is mentorship and helping other women rise in their professions.

Christine considers herself fortunate to be part of a diverse corporation and part of an industry that has always drawn women in great numbers. She finds it truly gratifying to see women rise to the most senior level positions in the travel and cruise industries. She has remarked that the industry has nurtured females to allow for greater diversity of thought and set an example to attract the best female talent.



*A great leader listens more than talks with all teammates at all levels of an organization.*

—Jan Swartz

In creating a professional example for others, Christine said her mentoring style reflects Carnival's culture of collaboration and free exchange of ideas. It is this collaborative process that leads to true innovation and problem solving. She is also vocal that there is no one way to the top, so she aims to provide guidance and support to inspire others to follow their best path.

Lisa has consistently mentored women in her organization, and has helped empower women throughout the industry. She even hired the first female captain of a mega ship in America, the first female African bridge officer, and the first female Ecuadorian captain. She has been vocal about the need for young women to "raise their hand" as leaders and stand up for themselves and what they believe in.

"I am a big believer in having an advocate," she said. "Someone of influence who can sponsor you and help you achieve your career aspirations. It is important to find advocates so that you can more easily navigate your way to the place you want to be.

"You can't do it alone, and you can't count on people noticing how terrific you are. You've got to work it!"

She is an advocate for the advancement of gender equality and champions projects beyond her Royal Caribbean brand and the various organizations with which she is involved.

Jan recognizes the cruise industry's quickness to embrace female leadership. She believes that the strong value of diversity in the industry, and at Princess specifically, is a vital key to success. She believes diverse teams drive better results. Because of this, she is working to draw more women to the cruise industry.

She credits her many mentors for helping her gain confidence, a key trait in a successful female executive. In turn, she strives to be a mentor to the entire Princess team by listening to her teammates at all levels of the organization and visiting ships and international offices in order to stay connected to the heart of the business. She relies on her background in strategic planning to encourage others to see the big picture and identify risks. She believes people and culture are the greatest assets to any company.

When asked about the traits great leaders possess, Jan's opinion is to the point. "A great leader listens more than talks, with all teammates at all levels of an organization," she said. Meanwhile, Christine says her mantra has always been, "Aspire to inspire, because I strongly believe as leaders we can only reach greater heights when we are successful in inspiring, motivating, and engaging others." She believes there are many ways to lead, but puts emphasis on how important it is to be a leader who is willing to listen and learn from others, as well as provide employees with an open environment to explore, innovate, and collaborate. Lisa said the simple definition of a leader is "someone others want to follow."

She believes great leaders should possess drive, vision, integrity, and trust.

### **Nothing Ventured, Nothing Gained**

Every great leader can find inspiration in other great leaders from inside and outside of their industry. Christine draws inspiration from the *Darkest Hour* about Winston Churchill, "Success is not final; failure is not fatal. It is the courage to continue that counts."

"There are many roads on a journey," she said. "Persevere, stay the course, and always look for unexpected opportunities that come your way."


Lisa believes in what Eleanor Roosevelt said, "Do one thing every day that scares you." She creates opportunities to take on projects that may be "scary," but can bring transformative change and results.

Jan finds strength in the saying, "Nothing ventured, nothing gained."

### **Staying Grounded**

Striking a balance with a busy career and a healthy personal life is vital. Though being president of Carnival Cruise Line keeps her busy, Christine says she enjoys some down time that mostly includes spending time with family, reading, yoga, and cooking. Lisa finds balance as an avid football fan and said, "For me there are only two seasons, football season and waiting for football season!" She also enjoys spending time with her family and her dogs. When not managing the massive team at Princess, Jan stays busy spending time with her two daughters, practicing meditation, and running.

Gender diversity goes beyond the cruise lines. As president and CEO of CLIA, Kelly Craighead has followed in Christine's footsteps, and her executive appointment marks the third female CEO to lead the charge, setting the stage for the industry worldwide. Interestingly, the industry is also seeing a surge in female interest from the traveler side, as well. A recent CLIA cruise travel trend report<sup>3</sup> found female-centered cruising is on the rise. The cruise industry has adapted to this demand with interest-specific itineraries and cruises that create a community of female empowerment at sea, while allowing travelers to experience the world around them, as well as visit famous feminist landmarks.

The growth of the cruise industry, driven by diverse talent around the globe, proves the suspicions of the past have lifted, and female leadership is a wave the industry will ride into the future. 

### **Endnotes:**

1 <https://cruising.org/news-and-research/research/2018/december/2019-state-of-the-industry>

2 [www.cruiseindustrynews.com/cruise-news/19389-women-in-the-cruise-industry-carnival-maritime-strengthens-cooperation-with-wista.html](http://www.cruiseindustrynews.com/cruise-news/19389-women-in-the-cruise-industry-carnival-maritime-strengthens-cooperation-with-wista.html)

3 <https://cruising.org/news-and-research/press-room/2018/december/2019-cruise-travel-trends-and-state-of-the-cruise-industry-outlook>





# MARITIME ORGANIZATIONS

*The strength of the maritime industry has always been its people; the highly trained, highly skilled mariners, workers in shipbuilding and repair, and those in other essential shoreside jobs. We help keep this industry strong by seeking out the best, which means supporting organizations that encourage women to pursue maritime careers. In a year in which the International Maritime Organization has chosen the theme “Empowering Women in the Maritime Industry,” let us all ‘take a strain’ on encouraging women to join our industry and supporting them in their workplaces and in their career development to help keep the industry that we love growing and strong.*

—Mark H. Buzby  
Maritime Administrator

IF YOU BELIEVE IT, YOU CAN ACHIEVE IT



# Kathy Metcalf

President & Chief Executive Officer,  
Chamber of Shipping of America

by LCDR VERONICA McCUSKER  
*U.S. Coast Guard*

**I**t was just after 2 a.m. on a cold morning in February 1983, when the M/T *Tropic Sun* changed its inbound course, turning straight into the gale which was raging off the coast of Virginia. The ship's captain announced they were responding to a distress call from the SS *Marine Electric*. As they approached the wreckage, it became apparent that most of the crew were beyond rescue, having succumbed to the frigid Atlantic waters. The use of their rescue boats precluded by the sea states, the M/T *Tropic Sun* readied her nets over the side of the ship to assist any survivors. Third mate, Kathy Metcalf manned the bridge for the first two hours, then worked down on deck for another three. Only three of the 37

crewmen of the SS *Marine Electric* survived. This was a pivotal tragedy in U.S. maritime history, and one she will carry with her as a career-defining moment, a career which she came into almost entirely by accident.

Kathy Metcalf is the daughter of a career U.S. Air Force flight engineer and a stay-at-home mother. She spent her early childhood in various duty locations, including France, Massachusetts, Texas, Oklahoma, and Alabama, until her family settled in Dover, Delaware, in 1963. Faith played a big role in the Metcalf household, and she worked part time as an organist for three services per day at the Dover Air Force Base Chapel, a skill she carried into adulthood. She always thought she wanted to be a medical doctor but did not want to burden her parents with the cost of a college education. She initially turned to the military to achieve her goals and received nominations to West Point, the Naval Academy, and the Air Force Academy. Since none of the service academies admitted women yet, she enrolled at the University of Delaware as a pre-med student. However, her whole life changed in 1973 when Senator Joe Biden of Delaware called her and asked if she was interested in attending the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy at King's Point, which would begin enrolling women in 1974. With the desire to follow a military path to her goals, Kathy enthusiastically accepted. She and 14 other women led the way as members of the first co-educational class at a United States service academy. During her time at King's Point, she developed a deep appreciation for the maritime industry which shifted her professional focus away from the medical field. In 1978, she graduated, with highest honors, alongside eight other women obtaining a bachelor's degree in nautical science and marine transportation with minors in business





administration, oceanography, and organic chemistry.

Kathy said that aside from the restrictions on acceptance of women into a service academy, the obstacles she faced were the same as any “rookie” cadet, regardless of gender. She addressed long and short term challenges in the same way.

At the time of the *SS Marine Electric* tragedy, Kathy had been sailing professionally as a deck officer for five years with Gulf Oil Corporation and Sun Company. She had recently accepted a follow-on shore assignment in Philadelphia, with Sun Company as the fleet safety and health coordinator, in what would be a career-long focus on safety and regulatory compliance. Deeply impacted by the tragedy of the *SS Marine Electric*, she aggressively advocated for Sun Company’s adoption of the first cold-water survival suits,

lifesaving gear which is common today, but which was not required or widely available at the time. Her efforts were successful well in advance of regulations, which eventually made survival suits mandatory. She served in this capacity for seven years, overseeing the safety and health programs for 26 vessels, including oceangoing ships, tug, and barge units. In the evenings, she attended the Delaware Law School of Widener University, graduating with high honors and a Juris Doctor degree in 1988. In 1990, she shifted from the Marine Operations Division to Sun Company’s Corporate Health, Environmental, and Safety Department in regulatory policy analysis, then in corporate oversight and assessment as a senior consultant. During this time, she worked to develop the corporate emergency management and internal audit programs. In 1993, she was promoted to manager of state governmental affairs for Sun Company’s operations in the Midwest, where she honed her skills in strategic relations with regulatory agencies and state legislatures on behalf of her company.

Today, Kathy serves as chief executive officer (CEO) of the Chamber of Shipping of America (CSA), an organization that represents U.S. commercial shipping interests in the United States and worldwide. She started working with CSA in 1997 as the director of maritime affairs after leaving Sun Company for a career change. In 2015, she was appointed president and CEO of CSA. She enjoys the client-oriented nature of her work, such as responding to a recent inquiry from the International Chamber of Shipping regarding two U.S. bills on Russian sanctions.

“The issues are diverse and endless ... and I would like to have more resources ... You make do with what



Kathy Metcalf pauses for a photo with author LCDR Veronica McCusker during a 2019 women’s event held at Coast Guard Headquarters in Washington. Metcalf is president and CEO of the Chamber of Shipping of America and was a speaker for the event. Photo courtesy of LCDR Veronica McCusker

you’ve got [and] prioritization is key,” she said. One of the most rewarding aspects of her career has been her interaction with the people in the maritime industry, a relatively exclusive community in which one encounters familiar faces across the globe.

When asked about diversity in the workplace, Kathy expressed that real change requires a cultural shift in the industry, which does not come about through mandates or quotas, but rather involvement at every organizational level. As more women achieve positions of leadership the culture will become more accepting of gender diversity. “It becomes a way of life and is no longer worthy of a lot of publicity,” she said.

She believes that being one of the first women to graduate from a federal academy was a big deal in the past, but it should not be a big deal today. A proactive approach to diversity “makes great business sense,” she said. And while there are still challenges when it comes to increasing gender diversity, diversity of all kinds should be equally addressed, looking at 100 percent of the population for its workforce. Kathy thinks that attracting more women into maritime occupations requires the same recruitment strategies that companies use to attract anyone into the industry, namely improved outreach to the public and at the secondary school level.

She has had several supervisory and peer mentors over the years who taught her things “you can’t learn from a book,” including the master of the first vessel on which she served. He was initially open with her about not wanting to have women aboard his ship. However, being a good leader, he overcame his own bias and treated her



*Be patient, be persistent,  
and never play the victim.  
I assumed that if others had  
gone through the same type of  
challenges and succeeded then  
so could I. ...The self-discipline  
required to complete any cur-  
riculum is a great foundation  
for creating good habits once  
you enter the work force.*

—Kathy Metcalf


like any other third mate. She believes that everyone has a responsibility to dedicate time to mentoring others, in a formal or informal capacity, with the understanding that what she has accomplished is partly because someone took the time to mentor her. Kathy's first mentors were her parents. They instilled in her a strong sense of her ability to achieve, built on a foundation of great love and faith.

Balancing work life and family, Kathy said, is still the toughest challenge for women in the workplace, especially for mariners. Currently, for her, that means being present with and caring for her 97-year-old mother who lives in Delaware. To meet this challenge, Kathy commutes from Delaware to Washington, by train three times per week and teleworks the other two business days.

"The ideal is to give 100 percent to your job and 100 percent to your family. An impossible task given that we all have only one 100 percent to use. Always a challenge," she said.

The solution is not simple, and, although companies may take progressive steps to mitigate the inequities between men and women in the workplace, professional women still have to frequently figure out solutions with their coworkers. With industry changes that include reduced crew sizes, increased vessel sizes, the impacts of technology, and increased individual workloads, companies are faced with multi-faceted challenges to providing desirable work environments for all their employees. For women and men alike Kathy's advice is the same.

"Be persistent, be competent, and keep your focus on the ultimate goal for your particular career path," she said. "Having a career plan is important, but given the uncertainty of the future, always be sure that your career plan has sufficient flexibility to allow you to react to new opportunities."

On the professional horizon, she sees herself eventually retiring officially, then applying her vast knowledge as a consultant. Approachable and forthright in her demeanor, both witty and humble, Kathy would rather we not highlight her own life's journey. Instead, she names other accomplished women she knows, but she long ago accepted the periodic attention that her status as a "first" has garnered, though with no less reluctance to be in the limelight. Through the questions about her life and her path, her admiration and respect for her peers shines through. She listens acutely and speaks meaningfully. Sharp-thinking and detail oriented, to-the-point, and relaxed in conversation, it is clear why she has long been admired as a leader. She genuinely cares for those within her circle of influence, the impact of her life's work, and the maritime industry. After 40 years in the profession, she summarized the qualities of an effective leader as "honesty, respect for others, competency, communications, and promoting a team concept in the workplace." 



## SAILING TO THE NEXT RIGHT THING

# Carleen Lyden Walker

President & Founder, North America  
Marine Environment Protection Association

by COURTNEY ELLITON AND CHRIS CARTER  
*U.S. Coast Guard*

Stories are stitched together by moments and events that seem unrelated when viewed in isolation. Sew the narratives together, however, and a bigger picture, and purpose, becomes clear. Carleen Lyden Walker witnessed a moment like this in 2009 when she worked with the U.S. Coast Guard to bring the World Maritime Day to the United States. Hosting the event called for a sum of nearly half a million dollars. "I had to raise a lot of money to make this happen," Carleen recalled.

When she started raising the funds in 2008, America was in the throes of a severe economic downturn. She wondered how she could possibly raise half a million dollars in an industry that was financially strangled. Displaying her characteristic grit and determination, Carleen remembered the old adage about how to eat an elephant, "One bite at a time."

Marshalling her ingenuity, she vowed to find those funds.

"I came up with the idea of putting together a quilt. I went to industry and organizations and various groups, and I sold patches on a quilt. You have no idea how skeptical a mostly male group was about funding a quilt, but they agreed," Carleen said. "I was able to raise half a million dollars by putting this quilt together, and every time they see it, either at IMO [International Maritime Organization] in London, or at USCG Headquarters in Washington, they point to their logos with pride!"

This quilt offers a vivid description of Carleen's overall experience in the maritime industry. Through several positions, organizations, and efforts, she wove an almost seamless pattern of passion, dedication, and perseverance into her life.

With over 40 years of experience

in the maritime industry, she has fresh and salt water and passion coursing through her veins in equal parts. She eagerly shared stories and experiences from her own journey. Growing up in Grosse Ile, Michigan, an island south of Detroit where the Detroit River and Lake Erie meet, Carleen found her escape watching the vessels frequent the waterway. Through this experience, she became fascinated with the maritime industry, eager to learn about the destination, cargo, and crews onboard. However, she realized that, as a woman, the tides did not always flow in her favor.

For many years, the maritime industry was primarily represented by men. "When I joined the maritime industry," she said. "I immediately noticed the paucity of women." While women served in administrative roles, they were generally not found in operational jobs





Carleen Walker speaking at SHIPPINGInsight. Photos courtesy of Carleen Walker

or management positions. Those who were able to penetrate the barriers faced disbelief and skepticism from their male colleagues. To help overcome this obstacle, Carleen said she received a Coast Guard captain's license, "Because I knew that as a woman in this industry I had to get 'water cred.'"

The early 70s marked a critical sea change for the industry, however. Starting in 1974, the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy in Kings Point, New York, began admitting women to their program. Despite this watershed moment, retention of women in the maritime industry remains an issue.

Undaunted by these challenges, Carleen cultivated lasting solutions. In 1995, she organized a conference called Women in Shipping: Navigating to the Top. Women from the United States and around the world gathered to pursue change. Some of the international attendees hailed from the Women's International Shipping and Trading Association (WISTA), a group whose mission is to "attract and support women, at the management level, in the maritime, trading and logistics sectors." Building off this initial foundation, some of the

American delegates launched WISTA USA. "That was the beginning of what is now the largest WISTA group in the global organization," she said.

In addition to the issues facing women in the maritime industry, Carleen confronted a lack of public awareness regarding the role of this sector in the economy and its contributions to society. Reflecting on high-profile incidents of the last few decades, she said that people commonly only associate the maritime industry with "oil in the water and dead birds." This misperception misses a key facet of the sector.

"Shipping is the engine of global trade," Carleen said, going on to quote former IMO Secretary General Efthymios Mitropoulos. "Without it, 'Half the world would starve and the other half would freeze.'"

Sensing a disconnect between the maritime industry and the American public, she set out to reshape opinions. She advised shipping companies to, "let the public know who you are, what your value is, and how you're helping their lives." By serving as the co-founder and executive director of the North American Marine Environmental Protection Association (NAMEPA), Carleen fashioned a forum for open communication and transparency. The two main goals of this organization are working with industry, regulators, conservation groups, and educators to discuss strategies to protect the marine environment through public outreach and education "where we educate seafarers, port communities, and students to 'Save Our Seas.'" Currently, NAMEPA has more than 200 members.

"Every time we get a new member is a success story," Carleen said. "Every time we reach a student whose eyes are open to the industry and the marine environment, that's a success story."

She is currently working to expand this effort to the Caribbean by focusing efforts on environmental protection against marine pollution.

Pulling from the open communication channels she helped craft, she, a self-designated "Coast Guard Groupie," seeks to encourage the shipping industry to sell themselves to regulators, including the Coast Guard. For a while, companies were hesitant to partner with the Coast Guard because most interactions were limited to infractions. Opportunities for open conversations, however, allow the industry to partner with the Coast Guard in a solution-based relationship.

Whether working with the maritime industry or pioneering stronger partnerships, Carleen lives by the qualities she sees as essential to careers in the shipping sector: positive energy, enthusiasm, sheer desire to make a difference. When asked about her daily routine, she reflects on the role she embodies.

"I've got a passion for the industry," she said. "So when I wake up in the morning, it's not what do I have to do. It's what do I get to do today?" As a mentor to





Carleen Walker with cupcakes in front of the fundraising quilt at USCG HQ (left), and with her grandson, Pierce (right).

students in the maritime academies and young professionals in the shipping industry, she implores her mentees to be passionate about what they do.

“How can you have a bad day? I’ve never counted the hours,” she said. “I just do what needs to be done to get the job done. And if it takes 12 or 14 hours that’s fine with me because I love it. I just absolutely embrace everything I’m doing.”

This ethos permeates everything she does. In 1999, Carleen started her own company, Morgan Marketing & Communications.

“[It] was the only way I could manage being a single mom with two children and put a roof over our heads,” she said. “I am grateful that the maritime industry embraced me and the skills I could offer.”

In addition to her active roles in NAMEPA and her company, Carleen is the chief evolution officer of SHIPPINGInsight and co-founder/executive director of the Consortium for International Maritime Heritage. The Coast Guard recognized her awe-inspiring efforts with the Certificate of Merit in 2010 for her work on World Maritime Day, and a Public Service Commendation in 2014 for supporting the Coast Guard’s Automated Mutual-Assistance Vessel Rescue System program. In 2015, the service nominated Carleen to be an International Maritime Organization Goodwill Maritime Ambassador, a role she continues to fill as an advocate for the maritime industry.

In addition to these professional roles, she can often

be found on the water sailing for pleasure and travel. Though she has visited many foreign countries, Greece is among her favorite destinations. When her boat returns to shore, she is constantly promoting the Coast Guard. As a “Coast Guard Groupie,” she enjoys bringing cupcakes to hand out at the Coast Guard Headquarters every December and is also on the board of trustees for the Coast Guard Foundation. She currently resides in Weston, Connecticut with her husband, Rob. While her two children (plus two “bonus” children by marriage) are “grown and flown,” she is a proud “Glamma” to her grandson, Pierce.

Although a variety of obstacles face women invested in the maritime industry, Carleen’s personal mantra helped her navigate rough seas.

“Have faith, put one foot in front of the other, and do the next right thing.”

With this in mind, she has contributed to the increase of women in the maritime industry, advocates for enhanced communication channels, and inspires others to protect the marine environment. Each of her experiences contributes to the larger story she is living. Like the quilt used to fund America’s 2009 World Maritime Day, the individual patches of her lifelong career have woven together to create an enduring impact on the maritime industry, which she couldn’t have done without following her own advice: Be steadfast, patient, persistent, and do your best. ■ ■



## MODELING LEADERSHIP

# Kierstin Del Valle Lachtman

Secretary General, Liberian Shipowners' Council

by LT LAUREN GAROFALO  
*U.S. Coast Guard*

**K**ierstin Del Valle Lachtman was selected to become the new secretary general of the Liberian Shipowners' Council in October 2018. Although her career just began a short six years ago, Kierstin has worked tirelessly to earn the prominent position she currently holds.

It all began at a young age. Her father and grandfather ignited her love of the cruise ship industry when she was growing up. Her father Richard Del Valle is the president and CEO of an expedition cruise company, Adventure Shipping Limited, and her grandfather Julio Del Valle, who emigrated from Cuba in the 1950s, was the president and CEO of two different cruise lines, Bahama Cruise Lines and Bermuda Star Lines. Kierstin's mother, Theresa, a nurse, never allows her, or her three siblings, to believe anything is out of reach for them professionally,

and always encourages them to pursue their dreams. Influenced by phenomenal stories of ocean liners and cruise ships throughout her childhood, these strong role models shaped Kierstin's desire to pursue a career in the cruise industry. Her passion would later play a pivotal role in her college search, steering her towards Webb Institute on Long Island, New York.

Kierstin was accepted to the highly competitive school which provides the only private, full-tuition scholarship undergraduate program of its kind in the country, with each class year averaging around 20 students. While at Webb, she also met her now husband, Andrew Lachtman, who has always been supportive in her endeavors.

After undergoing a rigorous four-year program, Kierstin graduated in 2013 with her Bachelor of Science in naval architecture and marine engineering. During her last year at Webb, she completed an internship with Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA) where she was offered the position as a technical advisor upon graduation. This was a special opportunity, as she would be replacing a legendary staff member, retired Coast Guard CAPT Ted Thompson, one of her first mentors with a very long and decorated career. He stressed the value of reading and understanding everything, as one of the most important keys to success. This resonated with Kierstin and provided her courage to accept the daunting position.

Kierstin began her role with CLIA in August 2013, becoming the third generation of Del Valles in the shipping industry, and fulfilling her dream of working in the cruise industry. Her position entailed supporting the most senior staff with their representation and advocacy work on behalf of the cruise industry as a whole. It was intimidating for her when meeting other technical advisors that had "been around the block." She was a 22-year-old female with a lot of enthusiasm, but lacking years of experience and background in the cruise industry. Keeping CAPT Thompson's advice in the back of her mind, she established a strong work ethic and drive that was respected among her colleagues. Her main contributions included developing briefings for CLIA to present at the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and attending various working groups. By 25, she led her first





delegation to the IMO on behalf of CLIA, but claims this would not have been possible without the leadership and mentorship she received from Charles (Bud) Darr.

Darr was the senior vice president of maritime policy for CLIA until 2017, and is currently the executive vice president of maritime policy and government affairs at MSC Group, the Swiss-based shipping and logistics conglomerate. Kierstin attributes her many opportunities for growth and leadership to Darr. Being a young woman was never a factor in his eyes, she was always just a member of Darr's team. This allowed her to gain valuable experience over time and not only take on challenging leadership tasks, but conquer them with professionalism. Her confidence and wealth of knowledge continued to grow during her tenure with CLIA.

After two years with CLIA, Kierstin saw an advertisement for an engineering management graduate program through George Washington University while commuting to work. Until this point, she was unsure if she would find a master's program of interest, but she happened to live across the street from the university at the time and could not help but seize the opportunity. She was accepted into the program and graduated in 2018 with a Master of Science in engineering management.

While she was working on her degree, Darr departed CLIA for MSC Group. At first Kierstin was apprehensive about who would replace him and what his or her leadership style would be, as she had been very fortunate to not yet encounter age or gender barriers. She would be working for retired Coast Guard VADM Brian Salerno, and had no reason for concern. From his first day as senior vice president of maritime policy at CLIA, VADM Salerno fully respected and trusted any recommendation Kierstin made. He always made sure that her input was given equally consideration.

The common thread of all Kierstin leaders and mentors was their ability to look past her age and gender. In 2018, Darr reached out to Kierstin suggesting she apply for the secretary general position with the Liberian Shipowners' Council (LSC). He felt she would be the perfect fit and it would advance her career. Her initial reaction was, "That is really nice of you to say, but I'm not sure I am qualified to do this job."

As the national shipowners' association of owners who register their vessels in Liberia, LSC is the exclusive collective voice of Liberian-flag shipowners. It represents shipowners at various national and international venues where it advocates its members' positions to governments, industry, and to the Liberian Administration. LSC's mission is to protect and promote its members interests while maintaining high standards of quality, safety, and environmental protection. While it enjoys a close and cooperative working relationship with the Liberian Registry, LSC was founded by shipowners for the benefit of shipowners

and is completely independent from the Registry.

Kierstin decided to take a chance and apply, her resume landed in the hands of Joe Ludwiczak who had held the position for more than 20 years. Even though she was a young female candidate, Ludwiczak noted that her credentials were a strong match for what LSC was looking for in a new leader and in turn recommended her to the board of directors. After a rigorous interview process with senior leaders from Liberian shipowners, she was offered the position in October 2018.

Asking Kierstin to reflect on her career as a woman in the maritime industry thus far, she said being a young person was a larger barrier than her gender. She hadn't perceived being a woman as an issue at all when beginning a career in shipowner representation and advocacy. Luckily, she had supervisors and colleagues that provided opportunities to help her overcome her age barrier, which ultimately laid the groundwork for her current success and reputation amongst industry peers. She witnessed many strong and well-respected women leaders firsthand during her visits to the IMO and strives to embody these individuals every day. While working for CLIA, she realized that the number of women vastly outweighed the number of men. This made her feel as though the industry is keeping pace and evolving with the current norms, but you can never be sure.

"Get away from the idea that just because you are a woman or a young person that you should experience adversity, it should not be an excuse for anything," she said. LSC on the other hand has fewer women, but she does not feel unequal to her male colleagues.

Not only has her work experience led to her own leadership philosophy, but Kierstin attributes lessons learned during her organizational behavior graduate course for shaping this philosophy. The two key takeaways she strives to apply are, not taking professional encounters personally and realizing that many people are motivated by different things. She always remembers that there may be another motivating factor behind a response perceived to be inappropriate, and it is extremely important to take time to observe your employees and gauge what impacts their work satisfaction. With this awareness, she has tailored her management style to increase the productivity and morale of her colleagues. Kierstin finds the most important leadership qualities to be trust, support, knowledge, and humility. A good leader will trust themselves and their team, support their team, know their organization, people and impacts, and be open to new ideas and viewpoints, even if they conflict with their own.

Kierstin's personal mantra is, "Remember the course of a good leader and try to abide by it the best you can." Whenever she has a challenging day, she thinks about how she can improve the situation going forward and learns from her mistakes through humility. ■

BE PRESENT WHERE I AM



# Jennifer Carpenter

Executive Vice President & Chief Operating Officer,  
American Waterways Operators

by LCDR JILL BESSETTI  
*U.S. Coast Guard*

**B**e present where I am. Those are words that have guided Jennifer Carpenter throughout her 28-year career in the maritime industry.

The executive vice president and chief operating officer of the American Waterways Operators, a national trade association for the tugboat, towing, and barge industry, has been a part of several major milestones in the marine transportation industry. Her work on the Oil Pollution Act of 1990 and, more recently, Subchapter M have laid foundations for the maritime industry, particularly the inland river system, and paved a path to raise safety standards of the towing industry.

A native of St. Louis, Jennifer grew up near the industry she built her career around, yet was unaware of the many opportunities available. It was not until she moved to Washington, to pursue a degree in international politics that she was introduced to the American Waterways Operators (AWO). This introduction started a lifelong journey of advocacy and collaboration to raise awareness and increase safety across the maritime industry. While working on her Master of Science in conflict analysis and resolution at George Mason University, she learned to connect the dots, recognizing different perspectives and increasing her world view.







A tow pushes 35 barges under a Vicksburg, Mississippi, bridge. Coast Guard photo by Chief Petty Officer 3rd Class Jonathan Lally


In 1984, she led a working group that developed the Responsible Carrier Program (RCP) for the inland river industry. This program laid the foundation for safety management systems, creating a code of safe practices for the industry, and was ultimately the beginning of the recent implementation of the regulatory requirements in Title 46 U.S. Code of Federal Regulations Subchapter M requiring towing vessels to obtain a Coast Guard certificate of inspection. The RCP instituted voluntary action as a condition of membership to AWO and to ensure safety and accountability are now the new standards of operation. Although Subchapter M regulations went into effect in July 2018, Jennifer continues working closely with the Coast Guard and other policy makers to ensure the regulations are applied fairly across the industry.

Her passion to advocate and share opportunities in the maritime world to future generations is certainly one of Jennifer's strengths. She regularly speaks to groups in the maritime community, as well as in schools and other organizations, and serves as an ambassador for the industry. Her secret to success is to find inspiration every day in mentors and a team that relies on each other, not individual accomplishments. One of her own lifelong mentors, Irene Mendelzon, shared her advice on balancing the demands of a career and family, "A career works inside a life that works."

Jennifer is mindful of this quote as she balances her job and her personal life, making sure to appreciate and

*Jennifer said her secret to success is finding inspiration in mentors and teamwork, not individual accomplishments.*

respect people as individuals. As the dynamics of leadership and society evolve, she reminds others to ask for what they need and to lead by harnessing the strengths of team members. In a world that constantly demands more in less time, leaders can never be too sensitive to the needs of their people. She is a firm believer that knowing what you want or need, and going for it, in your career will help build resiliency and sustainability in all aspects of life.

While there have been some challenges along the way, persistence and respect for those around the table, have led Jennifer down a successful road where collaboration and diversity meet. As she challenges each of us to remain steadfast and confident in ourselves, she exudes positivity and energy. She is an example to follow your passion, have confidence, and be resilient through all of life's challenges! 



## TAKING CHARGE OF HER FUTURE

# Ally Cedeno

Founder, Women Offshore

by LCDR ANNA MCNEIL  
*U.S. Coast Guard*

**W**omen Offshore is an information and resource center for a diverse workforce on the water. It shines a light on women in operations, provides resources to foster long-term careers, and shares the latest efforts on gender diversity and inclusion in the offshore and maritime industries.

Ally Cedeno, founder of Women Offshore, is a skilled mariner with experience in both the maritime and offshore energy industries over the last 10 years. A 2008 graduate of the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy, she holds licenses as chief mate of unlimited tonnage vessels and as a dynamic positioning operator. She is also an established leader, a writer, and a voice for the new generation of American offshore industry workers.

Ally is a leader because she is a community builder. Throughout history, those like her have been motivated and energized by bringing people together to support each other as they forge their own paths. In this way,

Ally and the members of her organization are force multipliers. An avid contributor to *Maritime Executive* magazine, she is able to call attention to stories of significance to her offshore community, publishing articles on topics like a father-daughter team of vessel pilots and the crew of the USNS *Henson*. If you have not already had the pleasure of hearing the Women Offshore podcast, more than 15 episodes are now available. In listening to Ally speak and interview other community leaders, it is quickly apparent there are three qualities she champions—inclusion, diversity, and ownership.

Among all the changes in the offshore oil and gas industry, Ally sees myriad opportunities for future generations of maritime professionals to use their digital penchant. From automation to information, navigation to desalination, she knows the maritime industry needs a technically minded workforce. The challenge for supervisors and employers is going to be much more



Ally Cedeno evaluates indicators on the console of an ultra deepwater drillship. Photo courtesy of Ally Cedeno



than simply giving the new and more diverse workforce a chance to be present at the discussion table, Ally said. Rather, the crux of the issue is going to be ensuring new mariners feel welcome and wanted in the workplace. In other words, included.

### **Inclusion**

There is a clear difference between listening to a younger generation's opinions, and actively seeking them out. The seasoned leader will recognize a time-tested truth: Know your ship and know your crew. Ally has new insight to add here. The most important steps toward inclusion might lie not only in good communication and the interpersonal skills of your supervisors, but also in making changes to the workplace itself. Inclusive measures might take the form of details like providing sanitary waste bins in toilet stalls, separate changing areas and bathrooms to support modesty, or safety clothing such as coveralls and gloves that truly fit a body of a different size or shape. It is an unavoidable fact that the current standard equipment, setup, or facilities might need to change if the physical characteristics of the workforce are also changing.

Is this the first time you've heard such a request? In a recent interview on her podcast, Ally heard from Linda Babcock, author of "Why Women Don't Ask: Negotiation and the Gender Divide." This interview highlighted the familiar vignette of a proud, tough, skilled woman working in a typically male-dominated industry. She will often support and help mentor others around her, including women. Despite her willingness to lead, she may rarely ask for exceptions for herself in the workplace, even if she notices a slight or inconvenience. After all, she might reflect, is this really worth risking my reputation to speak up about? Is it important to me? We all notice when our needs are, and are not, anticipated, and this extends to the workplace. It is not asking for special treatment, nor is it a show of weakness. Rather, it is a show of strength, confidence, and professionalism to ask for the tools and products you need to do your job, given who you are. Any leader of the future workforce should recognize this.

### **Diversity**

Through her interviews with other mariners, and her own experiences offshore, Ally has noticed there is something very special about the camaraderie built at sea. She was at one time part of a vessel crew which included many other women. It was not until she promoted into a crew without such diversity that she was struck by how natural the opportunity for camaraderie had been with her old crew. This is true in the maritime community as much as any other; the crews, teams, and people we are surrounded by during the course of our work make all the difference.

When a worker encounters a problem or question beyond the realm of the technical, they naturally gravitate towards someone they can trust to understand them and relate to their perspectives or experiences. For women at sea, this need often presents itself as wishing you had another woman to talk to, face-to-face, Ally notes. Diversity in the workplace fosters precious camaraderie, which made difference in Ally's early experiences at sea. She founded her organization in part to enable the offshore industry to guide more women towards successful careers in the maritime environment, where they can build rapport in an increasingly diverse workplace.

*It has been important to develop not just one mentor, but a whole mentor network.*

—Ally Cedeno

### **Ownership**

Ally's advice to others starting out in the maritime industry is to take charge of your future. Research online until you understand that there are many different types of maritime jobs. They vary by skill and education requirements, and the lifestyle they provide. You don't have to go to sea for months at a time any more—your schedule can be several weeks on the vessel, followed by several weeks off the vessel enjoying time at home.

As with many of the maritime industry's best leaders, she also demonstrates ownership in her words and actions. In 2016, she observed a need and took ownership by creating a solution. Women Offshore has established an annual conference and built a network spanning ages, genders, and nationalities. When asked how she finds the time and energy to dedicate to this community, Ally simply says this is what she wants to do, and meeting with community members inspires and motivates her. There is nothing better than hearing from a listener or reader who relates to the stories she has shared, she said.

Ally Cedeno is moving full speed ahead in her offshore oil industry career. Since founding Women Offshore, she has crewed a seventh-generation, ultra-deepwater drillship built in South Korea in 2017, and is attending Rice University's Jones School of Business in pursuit of a master's degree in business administration. Despite the many demands of her program, she remains actively engaged in Women Offshore and shaping the future of her chosen profession.

To keep up with all that she is working on, be sure to follow Women Offshore on major social media channels. //

WORK HARD, GET THE JOB DONE, BE YOURSELF



# Jeanne Grasso

Past President, Women's International Shipping & Trading Association, U.S.A.

by LCDR AMANDA HOOD  
*U.S. Coast Guard*

When the readers of this edition of Proceedings realize Jeanne Grasso is a lawyer, they will have to fight the urge to flip past and dismiss her as not a “real” mariner. No, Grasso did not graduate from a maritime academy. Nor has she been in command of a ship, but her love affair with all things maritime led her to become one of the United States’ premier maritime lawyers.

As a partner at Blank Rome, a law firm with the largest and most comprehensive maritime practice in the country, she is second in command of their Maritime and International Trade Practice Group. She is also an important member of Blank Rome’s Maritime Emergency Response Team. Her route to maritime law includes many disparate waypoints, but ultimately starts and ends with a love of the water.

Jeanne grew up in a small South Jersey farm town, but spent much of her time at the Jersey shore, where she first fell in love with the ocean. After spending her days teaching swimming lessons and working as a lifeguard in her home town, she turned to the Midwest to pursue

a biology degree at the University of Notre Dame. Her focus on aquatics tethered her to the Great Lakes and their maritime rhythms. The next waypoint was a major turning point in Jeanne’s route. She spent a semester at sea with the Sea Education Association out of Woods Hole, Massachusetts, during her junior year. This was her first time truly at sea and it pushed her into the current of maritime law.

“I didn’t realize it at the time, but my sea semester is what kept bringing me back to work in the maritime field,” she said.

After standing watches on the bridge, in the engine room, and finishing her research project while sailing the Atlantic down to the Caribbean on the R/V Westward, Jeanne finished her undergraduate degree in biology and went straight into a master’s in marine affairs program at the University of Southern California. Drawing upon her scientific background, Jeanne engaged with maritime policy, science, and law of the sea. But she couldn’t help but try herself on the Pacific. She signed up to spend three months aboard a Japanese fishing vessel in the Bering Sea, leveraging her biologist chops as a foreign fisheries observer for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

While finishing her masters she was selected for a one-year Sea Grant Fellowship and served in a staff position for the U.S. House Committee on Merchant Marine and Fisheries. Afterward, she slipped over to work at NOAA’s Office of Congressional Affairs focusing on fisheries and ocean matters. But after five years with NOAA, Jeanne searched for a new challenge. Remembering how she enjoyed the legal classes she took during her graduate studies, and drawing upon her biology background, she set her sights on a law degree from one of the top 10 environmental law programs in the country, the University of Maryland School of Law.







Jeanne Grasso is a frequent speaker at Maritime and Women's events, in this photo she participates in an International panel on Women in the Maritime at the International Maritime Organization headquarters in London. Photo courtesy of the International Maritime Organization

For those not familiar with legal education in America, law students are practically required to spend their summers in legal internships. So, there was no summer at sea for Jeanne, but it worked out well for her and the maritime industry.

When Jeanne looked for a summer associate position, she drew on her maritime network developed while working on Capitol Hill. One of her mentors, Duncan Smith, a retired Coast Guard Reserve admiral, helped her obtain a summer associate position at a boutique maritime law firm called Dyer Ellis & Joseph, where he was working at the time. She did not have the typical background for the firm. Many of her colleagues were retired Navy and Coast Guard, but this was not a barrier for her.

"Even though I came from a different background everyone at the firm took me under their wing," she said. "They gave me the opportunities to develop my experience and legal skills to succeed in maritime law."

She loved the job so much that she returned to the firm after finishing law school and has never left. After Jeanne had been with Dyer Ellis for 10 years, the firm merged with Blank Rome, and she is now a partner in the firm.

In many ways, her job at Blank Rome became the home port in her career. But as many a sailor will tell you, the sea will always lure you. So, why hasn't she sailed off to a new distant land? Because her work at Blank Rome is more than a home port, it is her ship at sea.

"Honestly, if I wasn't a maritime lawyer, I probably wouldn't still be a lawyer," she said. "Life as a lawyer is not always fun, but working in the maritime industry speaks to a passion in me and always presents new challenges that keeps me fascinated with my work."

Her current work is typically related to compliance counseling, investigations, and marine incidents, such as potential maritime pollution non-compliance or illegal discharges. She conducts compliance investigations, not just to determine what happened, but to understand the challenges that led to the issue, or why it happened.

"In my legal capacity, I am able to draw upon my science background to understand the technical underpinnings of

the operational challenges my clients face," she explained.

Many assume the role of a lawyer is adversarial; either the best friend or worst enemy to members of the maritime community or regulatory agencies. While this makes for good television, it is not always the case.

"I have a unique practice where I have to cultivate relationships with and between the Coast Guard, as well as other regulatory agencies, and my clients," she said. "We are really teaming up to solve a problem together—that is what I like to do best."

But this isn't always an easy feat.

"Often when I get a new matter which takes me aboard the ship, I have to start with explaining who I am and what I am doing to the captain and chief, as they sometimes look sideways at a woman coming aboard," she said. "You have to prove yourself, first by explaining what you are doing and that you have the experience and knowledge to do it."

While it seems natural that a lawyer will work well with their client, Jeanne also works well with the Coast Guard. "I've worked with members of the Coast Guard for a long time and have been pleased with their professionalism, at all levels, and their willingness to help solve problems," she said. "It's fantastic when the regulator and regulated can productively work together."

As with many in maritime professions, Jeanne is at her most fulfilled when she gets to go work with the fleet. However, she recognizes that, as one of her firm's leaders, she sometimes sacrifices what she wants in the name of developing more junior members of the crew.

"When I get the call about a new case, the first thing I want to do is jump on a plane and get to the ship. But I don't—sometimes," she said. "I remember the great mentors and leaders I had early in my legal career who gave me the opportunities and responsibility I needed to develop my legal skills in the field. I will send my associates, to give them the same opportunities to grow their experience that I had."

Jeanne had the great fortune to have many good mentors in her career, some of them former Coast Guardsmen who, "Took me with them and showed me how they



Jeanne Grasso enjoys a day of scuba diving, giving the "I'm okay sign" to her fellow divers, pictured in the photo on the right. Photo courtesy of Jeanne Grasso

did what they did." Jeanne places great importance on being a good mentor, explaining that the greatest benefit a mentor can offer a mentee is exposure and showing them what works for you.

As a leader and a mentor within her firm, she believes in treating everyone with respect, listening more than talking, and working collaboratively. As one of her associates noted, "Jeanne never yells, but speaks with a calm quiet. She wants you to tell her what went wrong and what your solution is."

As a woman in a male dominated industry, Jeanne is often asked about the role her gender has played in her career. "I don't see my gender as a barrier or adversity, but just another challenge. In the maritime industry everyone has to prove themselves and there is nothing wrong with that concept." But gender is often a barrier that men don't have to deal with. On more than one occasion when she has shown up to a ship with a male associate, the captain and crew address their questions and comments to her junior associate.

"It didn't matter that my associate would have much less experience, he would be the focus of the questions," she said. "I don't think getting offended or indignant is the way to handle those situations. I typically just answer the questions, even when they aren't addressed to me. They usually come around pretty quickly. There are many things that you just need to let roll off your back and move on."


In this way she overcomes challenges and gets the job done. "The most rewarding part of my job is after someone comes to you and you help them understand their problem or avoid problems—and keep the ship sailing on time," she said. "Despite compliance challenges in the beginning, they leave satisfied and recommend you to others."

One great outlet in working in a male-dominated industry is finding other women in the industry and networking with, and learning from, them. Women's International



Shipping & Trading Association (WISTA) is an amazing organization and one that Jeanne's been involved with for nearly 15 years, having served as president of WISTA USA for five years. She is currently completing her sixth year on the WISTA International Executive Committee. "WISTA is now comprised of about 3,000 women from 46 countries, representing all facets of the maritime industry," she said. "You laugh together, cry together, do business together, and make lifelong friends."

Jeanne's career track has taken her to many ports, but now in her homeport of Blank Rome, she continues to thrive in the maritime community. "The international maritime community brings together people from across the world and unites them through their passions. In my case, that is often a combination of a passion for the maritime industry and scuba diving. I'm lucky to have clients and friends in the industry that love to dive!" Jeanne would advise anyone going into the international maritime industry to build a network and be strong, respectful, and confident.

"If you don't know the answer, don't fake it!" she said. "Say you will find out. And most importantly, work hard, get the job done, and be yourself!" 



# GOVERNMENT

*The women highlighted in the following pages are among the outstanding leaders supporting the maritime industry in public service agencies. These and many other dedicated professional women have made significant impacts both within our agencies and in the maritime industry itself. We are fortunate to call them colleagues, mentors, and often Admiral, Captain, and Commander. Government has made great strides in opening opportunities for women, but we must continue to recognize and value a diverse workforce and strive to create an innovative and welcoming culture. To successfully meet the challenge of the future, it is imperative we continue to recruit the best and the brightest from across the entire talent pool.*

—Rear Admiral Richard V. Timme  
Assistant Commandant for Prevention Policy  
U.S. Coast Guard



T.A.N., READY, AND RESTED

# Elizabeth Kretovic

Deputy Hydrographer, NOAA's Office of Coast Survey

by DAVID HALL AND LCDR LAURA GIBSON  
NOAA

As every sailor knows, the ocean is an inherently dynamic environment where anything can happen. The stakes can be high and the challenges significant, especially if you happen to be the commanding officer of a ship that must accomplish multiple mission objectives during a long deployment far from home. Captain Elizabeth Kretovic of the National Oceanic and

Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), is all too familiar with such challenges. She has served aboard three ships, most recently as commanding officer of the 224-foot NOAA oceanographic research vessel *Hi'ialakai*.

During a typical mission, her team of NOAA Corps officers and civilian mariners deployed and recovered small boats, scientific equipment, and divers in remote areas of the western Pacific, often where little or no assistance was available. Dealing with the unexpected under pressure was part of the job.

"I was in charge of the safety of the ship and making sure that all missions got completed safely and accurately," Elizabeth said. In other words, the buck stopped with her, as it does with all commanding officers. But she was prepared.

The groundwork for her evolution as a leader and public servant was laid at an early age. The youngest of four, Elizabeth grew up in Worcester, Massachusetts, to parents from the "greatest generation." Her father served as a yeoman in the Navy during World War II. Several of her uncles served in the Navy, Coast Guard, and Merchant Marine. Her mother and aunts, meanwhile, took care of the home front. They, too, served as role models.

"They stood in and stepped up wherever they could," she said. "My mother took care of everything. She was one of the strongest women I have ever known."

She emerged from high school with an even greater sense of service. After watching a documentary about the *Exxon Valdez* oil spill, she became intent on pursuing a career in the environmental field and enrolled in Massachusetts Maritime Academy's (MMA) marine safety and environmental protection





program. There, she developed a desire to combine her passion for environmental protection with the maritime industry.

While at the academy, Elizabeth also got a sense of the challenges she would face as a woman in that industry. She recalls upper class women suggesting that she would be better off “being one of the guys” and trying her best to fit in. She would learn in the following years that standing out was actually a better strategy.

After receiving her Bachelor of Science degree from MMA, she was hired as a health and safety professional at a research and development facility. Then came another unexpected challenge. She was abruptly laid off after just nine short months on the job. It came as a huge surprise.

“In my mind, 22-year-olds right out of college weren’t supposed to get laid off,” Elizabeth said. “Dealing with the hardships associated with losing a job forced me to exercise resilience and helped me course-correct my career path back toward the marine environment.”

During her job hunt, she learned about the NOAA Commissioned Officer Corps and was quickly convinced that it would be a great fit, combining sailing as a deck officer with the marine environmental protection career she sought. “That is exactly what I have done throughout my 20-year career in the NOAA Corps,” she said.

In addition to four sea tours aboard three NOAA ships, she has served two land assignments with NOAA’s Office of Response and Restoration. Her role was to provide scientific support during oil and chemical spills, working alongside the same experts she saw in that documentary about the *Exxon Valdez* oil spill. She was involved in the response to several major incidents, including the *Cosco Busan*, *Barge DM932*, and the *Deepwater Horizon* spills, putting her MMA education to work while developing new skills and tackling new challenges.

But it was her experience as a lieutenant aboard NOAA’s largest ship, *Ronald H. Brown*, that she says was one of the most formative periods of her career and growth as a leader.

While serving on the *Brown* in 2006, she was asked to step into the role of executive officer (XO), a role usually reserved for more senior officers. She had acted as XO several times, but never for an extended period. The commanding officer (CO) constantly pushed her beyond her comfort zone throughout her sea tour, and this time



Captain Elizabeth Kretovic pauses for a picture to celebrate 100 years of the NOAA Corps. Photo courtesy of Elizabeth Kretovic

was no exception. One day while conducting operations off the coast of Chile, she realized that if something happened to the CO she would have to take command of the ship and assume responsibility for the safety of all 54 souls onboard. “This was a turning point in my career,” Elizabeth said. “And for the first time I realized that standing out rather than fitting in would lead to greater challenges, and also greater successes.”

While standing out—leading—was what she knew she needed to do. She also knew that there had to be a strategy behind it if she were to achieve both personal and mission success on land and sea.

As her career progressed, she developed and honed that strategy. She says it’s all about being T.A.N.—transparent, adaptable, and nimble—Rested, and Ready. That’s Elizabeth’s motto.

“I believe in strong communication and providing as much transparency as possible,” she explained. “When people know what’s going on, they don’t wonder. It takes the ambiguity out of things. When I was CO, if there were delays or something wasn’t going the right way, I would do my best to communicate the situation up and down the chain of command. I have found throughout my career that being transparent is an effective way of building trust with a crew at sea and various stakeholders and colleagues.”

She also strives to be adaptable and nimble, allowing



The NOAA ship *Hi'ialakai*, an oceanographic research vessel was Captain Elizabeth Kretovic's most recent command. Photo courtesy of National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)

her to keep up with the ever-changing environment she's in, whether on the sea or in the office. "Being adaptable, nimble, and flexible is key to dealing with challenges, whether you are talking about weather, mission needs, mechanical issues, or personnel matters," she said.

Being T.A.N. and being decisive, she points out, are not mutually exclusive. "I believe it's good to be a little flexible and deal with new information," she said. Be decisive and remove doubt whenever possible, but don't be afraid to make course corrections. "Adaptability is a sign of strength, not weakness," she said. "There is often more than one way to achieve an objective. It is also important to be fair and consistent with how you treat one person to the next."

As for "rested and ready," that's about maintaining a healthy work/life balance. "You have to make time for yourself so you're rested and ready when you need to be," Elizabeth said. "Ensure that you get a break and don't get burned out. You'll be reinvigorated, more focused, and ready to tackle anything."

She credits her husband, Brian, with helping her maintain that balance, which she acknowledges is not always easy with the long deployments and relocations that go with serving in uniform.

Being an effective leader is also about resilience, says Elizabeth. "You have to show up for your people, and if you are not showing your best self even on the worst days, you will lose their respect."

Having completed her tour as CO of the *Hi'ialakai*, Elizabeth currently serves as deputy hydrographer in NOAA's Office of Coast Survey, where she applies her strategy, education, and experience to help NOAA enhance the precision navigation services the agency offers to mariners. Always eager to grow personally and professionally, she is also enrolled in Massachusetts Maritime Academy's new maritime business management master's program.

Despite her busy schedule, Elizabeth takes time to

*When I first went to sea,  
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rewarding experience.*

—Captain Elizabeth Kretovic


mentor others and reflect on her journey as a NOAA Corps officer and a woman in the maritime industry. She says there have been both challenges and progress.

"When I first went to sea, I was the only woman in the crew," Elizabeth said. "A year-and-a-half ago, I served as commanding officer, with four women in my wardroom. It was the first time in my career I sailed with so many women as part of the crew, and it was a truly rewarding experience."

With cautious optimism, she notes that she can count on one hand the number of times she has felt challenged specifically because she was a woman. "In each case, I tried to face the challenge head on and take the appropriate action for the issue at hand," she said.

She also points out that there is more progress to be made.

"In order to increase diversity in the maritime industry we have to first think of everyone as our shipmates, and look beyond their race, gender, sexual orientation or other aspects that make them different," Elizabeth said, adding that inclusivity is also key to retaining talent. "People won't stay if they don't feel they are part of the organization."

For those just beginning their professional journey, she said perseverance is essential to a fulfilling career. "My advice to anyone starting out is always do your best, do the right thing, and if you stumble along the way, pick yourself up, dust yourself off, and get right back on track." 



WHEN THE DOOR OPENS, DON'T HESITATE TO WALK THROUGH

# Mayte Medina

Chief, Merchant Mariner Credentialing,  
U.S. Coast Guard

by LCDR STACI WEIST  
*U.S. Coast Guard*

Standing a petite five feet, Mayte Medina commands a presence that is very much her own. She draws others in with her coy, one-sided smile, clever personality, and distinctive laugh. However, it is her incredible expertise and ability to work to a consensus that is recognized not only in the United States but internationally, as well. The juxtaposition of her dynamic personality, heritage, and small stature have earned her the nickname The Panamanian Pocket Rocket. Mayte isn't a typical U.S. government worker, and her path to get here was even less conventional.

Her father, a civil engineer, frequently dragged her and her sister to work sites, including when he was called to execute the difficult jobs, picking up where others had failed.

"My father was a quiet man. He chose his words carefully, but the words he chose were always powerful," she said. "I think it was his way of teaching and mentoring my sister and me."

Well known and respected for his exceptional expertise and ability to solve complex problems, he became a role model for Mayte as a young girl.

While her family wasn't directly involved in the shipping industry, growing up in Panama City, in close proximity to the canal, its presence surrounded her. While not something she remembers first hand, there is a bit of a legend surrounding her entry into the maritime.

As a young girl, her mom would leave young Mayte with a babysitter whose husband would tell stories of his incredible adventures bringing enormous ships brimming with cargo through the narrow and

treacherous Panama Canal. With an eye for adventure, young Mayte told one of her father's friends, Omar Torrijos, that she wanted to be a pilot on the canal. Before control of the canal was transferred to Panama, all canal pilots were required to be U.S. citizens, but legend has it that her words left an impression on Torrijos. As the de facto leader of Panama, one of his primary objectives was negotiating the Panama Canal Treaties, which granted gradual sovereignty of the canal to Panama. But it would be years before Panamanian pilots would move ships on the canal.



Mayte Medina chairs the Sixth Session of the Sub-Committee on Human Element, Training and Watchkeeping in London. Photo courtesy of the International Maritime Organization



At 90 pounds, even the smallest fire suit was ill fitting. Photo courtesy of Mayte Medina

As she grew older, her dream of becoming a pilot faded and her mother encouraged her to focus on school. "Education is the only inheritance we can leave you, therefore, you need to go to the best university," she told her daughters.

To her mother, the best universities were in the United States. Mayte, however, wanted to stay close to home, so she decided to pursue an engineering degree at Panama University. Her mother had other plans.

"At the time I was dating someone who my parents didn't approve of so they found a way to remove me from the situation," she said.

Her mother spotted an advertisement in a local paper inviting Panamanian citizens to attend the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy in Kings Point, New York. Like most women, Mayte had plenty of anxiety about going to a male-dominated military school in order to enter into a male-dominated profession. That, coupled with moving to a new country, where the customs, culture, and language were all different than her own only added to her trepidation. She had no idea what she would be getting into

and being near family was so important she didn't want to leave home, but realized it was an incredible opportunity. Her mom put on the pressure, even threatening to stop paying for her education. Finally, she gave in.

As a small woman with an accent, it would be an understatement to say Mayte stood out at Kings Point. Additionally, at just 90 pounds, she required special-order uniforms, which meant she had to wear workout gear for the first week! Despite all of that, she claims she rarely felt like an outsider. Rather, she felt like a sister among a sea of brothers, all there for a common purpose. Life at Kings Point was difficult. Being away from family and the rigors of a military academy wore on her, and every year she looked for a reason to walk away but her parents pushed back.

With so few women, the options to play sports at Kings Point were definitely lacking. Her weight—or lack of—was her advantage. She was recruited for the sailing team, as a coxswain on the crew team, and was the "flyer," the one who gets tossed, on the cheer team.

While 17 women started with her at Kings Point, only 10 graduated! Mayte earned a bachelor's degree in engineering, marine systems, and a third assistant engineer's license from Panama.

"Attending Kings Point is the best thing that happened to me. I will forever be grateful to my parents for pushing me to go and to graduate," she said. "Kings Point provided me with a great education and a great alma mater."

After sailing on her license for about two years, she decided to try for a position in Panama's Maritime Administration. On a whim she asked Captain Alfred "Radar Al" Fiore, a Kings Point graduate and professor, a well-known mariner, and a WWII veteran who was then working for the Panama Administration for a recommendation. Thinking he didn't know her well enough to follow through, she was shocked when he agreed. Knowing one of their most respected technical experts was likely close to retirement, the administration made Mayte his understudy.

As a delegate to nearly all of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) meetings as well as other international organizations, she was forced to get up to speed on all maritime issues—credentialing, bridge equipment, and engineering—under her purview. She was driving herself crazy trying to become the expert, but then Captain



Fiore taught her that, "More important than knowing the answer, is knowing where to find it." She learned the treaties and how they were organized. He identified opportunities that allowed her to realize her passion in negotiating international requirements for shipping. She still gets emotional when she recalls her first professional mentor, so much so that she still keeps his lucky five-dollar bill held securely in his old money clip as a reminder of him.

From there she went to the Netherlands, taking a job as the managing director for Global Marine Engineering B.V. There she did failure mode effect analysis, design work, quality management systems for various pilots associations, and helped develop the organizational structure for the maritime sections of the European Commission – Maritime Division, which still exists today. She also continued her work with the IMO, but this time representing various countries and non-governmental organizations as a hired gun.

Along the way, she became a U.S. citizen, and it was during this time that she was approached by a senior U.S. Coast Guard civilian who encouraged her to consider applying for a position with the Coast Guard. Having experienced private sector life, she was not interested in working for another government administration. Her gut reaction was "Heck no!" Being an experienced diplomat, she kept the door open by saying she would think about it.

Little did she realize, her life was about to change. In 1999, Mayte received a devastating diagnosis of breast cancer.

"I needed a job back in the U.S. so I took him up on his offer," she said. "I came in for the interview wearing a wig and threw up in the bathroom just moments before."

Despite all that, she finished the interview and landed the job. When asked how she maintained her motivation to work during that time, she snapped back, "Are you kidding me? When you are that sick you need to keep busy. You need something to keep your mind off of what is happening."

Doctors claim the resilience built through routine stress can greatly enhance one's ability to fight off disease. Mayte fought the cancer the same way she fought through everything else in her life. She speaks of it as if it were no big deal, just a minor bump in the road, but adds that she thinks it was harder on her family than it was on her. Looking back on her choices she claims she wouldn't change a thing.

"Joining the Coast Guard as a civil servant is the best decision I ever made. It is rare to find a position that so closely aligns with your personal interests," Mayte said. "I have such an incredible ability to affect positive change on an international platform. The responsibility is huge. You have to speak to the mariners, the industry, and the public to make sure you get it right. These are people and this is how they make their living. It is so important."

When asked about her Coast Guard officer husband, a smile creeps across her face. He was recently promoted to rear admiral and she credits him for encouraging her to continue to accept challenging assignments and opportunities.

"He has always been so supportive of me, every time an opportunity presents itself he encourages me to keep going," she said.

Many men, don't believe they have a role in mentoring women, but Mayte argues the opposite.


"If you are a man in a male dominated field you absolutely have a role in mentoring women!"

In addition to Captain Fiore, Mayte credits Joe Angelo, Chris Jenman, Jeff Lantz, and Admiral Thad Allen for taking active roles in her professional growth. "Fortunately for me, I have had supervisors who found opportunities to help me grow personally and professionally. Often this involved opportunities that took me away from my primary duties and for many supervisors that is a difficult commitment. I am so grateful to each of them."

Mayte currently serves as the chief of merchant mariner credentialing, making policy and regulatory decisions that affect mariners worldwide, including the 60,000 U.S. mariners that are issued credentials each year. She also holds an elected position within the IMO as the chair of the Human Element Training and Watchkeeping Sub-Committee. She is a delegate to the IMO's Maritime Safety Committee, Council, and Assembly. She was the lead U.S. negotiator for the 2010 Manila amendments to the Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers Convention and Code, 1978 (STCW) and chaired the Drafting Group at the 2010 STCW Manila Conference. She is currently the lead U.S. negotiator for the regulatory scoping exercise for marine autonomous surface ships and council reform.

In addition to IMO, Mayte has extensively represented the United States at the International Labour Organization (ILO). She was the lead U.S. negotiator for the development of the 2006 Maritime Labour Convention (MLC) and chaired numerous IMO/ILO working groups for the development of guidelines concerning medical, occupational health, and port and flag state control. She currently serves as the U.S. head of delegation to all ILO meetings.

Mayte is an internationally recognized expert on mariner issues, the STCW and MLC, and travels the world speaking and providing advice and assistance to other countries on mariner education and training.

"Traveling in my capacity allows me to share what we do in the U.S. and my knowledge on the application and implementation of the international Convention," she said. "I am always learning something new everywhere I travel for work. Problems are not unique therefore, we can learn from each other." 

FROM MYTHICAL TO MARINER



# Marjorie Murtagh-Cooke

Former Director of Maritime Safety,  
National Transportation Safety Board

by CDR MARTHA MANNION  
*U.S. Coast Guard*

**T**he sea holds many wonders. One of my favorite parts of being in the “maritime industry” is the opportunity to embrace allusion to some of the most beautiful, terrifying, mysterious mystical creatures invented by the human mind. I think of the Kraken, Siren, Leviathan, Sea Serpent or Dragon, but why not also Aspidochelone

(Physiologus) or the Selkie (Scottish)? The sea holds the dreams and imaginings of many millennia of sailors, but none of these mythical creatures had been more elusive than women in the maritime. Thankfully over the past half century, this myth has faded into obscurity and the number of women in the maritime industry has grown

from mythical levels to those of reality.

Marjorie Murtagh-Cooke, in the true sailor’s sense, was a pioneer, opening the flood gates to make way for generations of women. Her actions helped women in the maritime take real form, and the maritime industry by storm.

Up until the 1970s, most women who had professional aspirations were limited to careers as nurses or teachers. Women with inclinations towards mathematics and engineering were not usually encouraged to seek careers in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) fields. Marjorie, had the benefit of the stars aligning when she received advice from her guidance counselor who saw that she had the intellect and temperament to be an engineer. With that encouragement, she applied for acceptance to the State University of New York (SUNY) Maritime. But not so fast; SUNY Maritime did not accept women into the student body in the 1970s. She sued the school for the right to attend—and won!

From her perspective, there were no other women serving as merchant mariners at that time, but she paved the way for the next generation of women, to be masters, engineers, and naval architects, among other shipboard careers requiring STEM. Admirably,





she not only blazed the trail for women to attend maritime schools, but like the scales in the constellation of Libra, she found a way to balance a family with this challenging career. Certainly not an easy feat!

She had cleared a path for future women mariners to follow, but she didn't stop there. After graduating from SUNY Maritime, she earned a Coast Guard license, and spent two years at her alma mater as the assistant dean of students establishing a women's program. Later she worked as a sea engineer for the Ford Motor Company, and was a main steam plant engineer aboard a Great Lakes ore carrier. After Ford, she worked for the Santa Fe Corporation as a project manager for myriad engineering projects to improve machinery and ship performance, and explored alternative fuels working toward conservation initiatives.

But wait. There is more! In the early 1980s Marjorie joined the United States Navy Military Sealift Command as a marine engineer. She was responsible for maintaining ships' scheduled engineering and maintenance operations and served as technical liaison with the command's management, field command, port engineers, as well as Defense Department sponsors, contractors, and shipyards. In that position she started to review and analyze ships' casualty reports.

With a mind for math and science, and a penchant for puzzles and the sea, where else would she land but the United States Coast Guard, of course. (A common gathering place for mermaids, when we are able.) As a Coast Guard marine engineer and chief of the fire prevention sections, she led changes that made the entire industry a safer place to work. She served as chairman of the U.S. Safety of Life at Sea Working Group on Fire Protection, and as delegate to the International Maritime Organization's (IMO) Subcommittee on Fire Protection. While serving in these roles, she researched and developed technical standards and requirements for the installation of smoke detectors, smoke alarms, and sprinklers aboard all large cruise ships worldwide.

With a career spanning several decades with unparalleled experience in industry and government, she landed a most prestigious position as the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) Director of Maritime Safety. As the senior manager of the NTSB's Marine Modal Office of Accident Investigation, she represented the NTSB before Congress, federal regulators, the maritime industry, safety groups, labor organizations, associations, societies, and as a member of IMO, addressing marine accident investigation issues.


As Marjorie's career indicates, she not only removed barriers, but was a leader for the women who followed in her footsteps. Since the mid-1990s she has continued to share her passion and gifts as an associate of Robson

*She had cleared a path for the future women mariners to follow. But she didn't stop there. After graduating from SUNY Maritime, she earned a Coast Guard license, and spent two years at her alma mater as the assistant dean of students establishing a women's program.*

*Later she worked as a sea engineer for the Ford Motor Company, and was a main steam plant engineer aboard a Great Lakes ore carrier.*

Forensics, providing technical investigation, analysis, reports, and expert testimony toward the resolution of maritime matters, and as a World Maritime University visiting professor.

With more than 40 years of experience, she is a recognized expert in marine accident investigation, both nationally and internationally. We thank her for her service to our nation, for being a role-model for women and men alike, and for sharing her story. Marjorie Murtagh-Cooke has set an example for us all. We could not be more thankful for her leadership, her mentoring of those with a passion for engineering and the sea, and for making the industry stronger with her contributions to accident investigation.

To your spirit and leadership, and as a sailor I'd take as captain, thank you for your service and may the winds continue to blow in your favor. 

JUST DOING HER JOB



# Jennifer Williams

Deputy Director, Marine Transportation Systems,  
U.S. Coast Guard

by LCDR MICHELLE KEATING  
*U.S. Coast Guard*

Jennifer Williams began her maritime career as a midshipman in 1986 at the United States Merchant Marine Academy (USMMA) in Kings Point, New York. Although not overly knowledgeable of the maritime world at the outset, it didn't take long after joining the regiment and feeling the camaraderie at Kings Point for her to decide she wanted to remain part of the maritime community. Over the next four years, she continued expanding her knowledge of the maritime industry and had her first introduction to the Coast Guard.

Prior to 1988, Jennifer knew little about the service beyond its search and rescue mission. It wasn't until sailing for Kings Point aboard an oceangoing vessel slated for dry dock that she discovered the service's marine safety mission. There, in a Malta shipyard, she met a triple threat—Maine Maritime graduate, direct commission

officer, and marine inspector—who inspected the ship she was aboard, enlightening her to the world of Coast Guard marine inspections. It was also there that she discovered the path she would follow and her field of work within the maritime domain.

Jennifer graduated from the USMMA in 1990 with a Bachelor of Science in marine transportation and an unlimited tonnage third mate's license. She sailed on that license for a total of nine days, before heading off to her new assignment as a freshly commissioned Coast Guard ensign. Assigned to the Marine Safety Office (MSO) Honolulu Inspections Division, then-Ensign Beck was eager to get out in the field and learn more about marine inspections, which had captured her interest two years earlier. She was, however, unaware of the commotion her arrival to the unit would create.



As Captain of the Port, Captain Jennifer Williams evaluates a backup of vessels at anchorage in the Port of Los Angeles Long Beach during a union dispute; the *YM Masculinity* is in the backdrop. Photo courtesy of Jennifer Williams



Marine Safety Office Honolulu was as excited as Jennifer to receive its newly appointed ensign, especially when they discovered he hailed from the esteemed USMMA. They prepared for their new member, planning to send him abroad to assist with inspections coverage in ship yards throughout Asia. The orders omitted one small detail. The Ensign J. Beck listed on the orders was not a man, and MSO Honolulu was shocked when Jennifer reported aboard.

Unbeknownst to Jennifer then, her new supervisors had many closed-door meetings following her arrival to determine if she should be allowed to conduct marine inspections and travel across Asia as her male counterparts did. This was new territory for MSO Honolulu. They had not expected a woman and had never had a female inspector amongst their ranks. In the end, her supervisors decided to take a chance on her. Ultimately, she proved to be equally qualified.

It wasn't until the end of her first tour that Jennifer learned of the frenzy her arrival caused. Yet, to this day she is grateful to her first supervisors who gambled and allowed her to prove herself. When she looks back on her career, she acknowledges there were challenges associated with women in the maritime industry, including the staggeringly small ratio of women to men. Her 1990 Kings Point class graduated about 200 men and 11 women. Similarly, women sailing on oceangoing vessels was quite uncommon, and when a woman was sailing on her license she was typically the sole female aboard that vessel. Yet, she never allowed the preconceived notions of others to dictate what she could or could not do. She just continued onward, reminding herself of her mantra, "Just keep trying and never give up!"

It was that determination that has led to nearly 30 years of Coast Guard service. CAPT Jennifer Williams has proven women are capable, helping to pave the way so that others do not encounter the same gender-based challenges. Her far-reaching contributions include countless lives saved through inspections and investigative efforts, as well as a particularly miraculous search and rescue case under her leadership. A man who had fallen overboard from a recreational fishing vessel in the Pacific Ocean was rescued after 7 hours of treading water.

Additionally, Jennifer can be credited with forever bettering both the maritime industry and the Coast Guard through initiatives she championed. In one instance, while serving in North Carolina as a commander, she recalls a particularly intricate investigation, stemming from allegations of sexual assault committed by a licensed mariner aboard a commercial vessel. In that case, then-Commander Williams tenaciously pursued evidence preparing to prove her case, something other investigators had been averse to in the past. The result was the accused mariner surrendering his license




Captain Jennifer Williams briefs Congresswoman Lois Capps and Senator Barbara Boxer during the 2015 Refugio Oil Spill. Photo courtesy of Jennifer Williams

and departing the maritime industry. Another initiative began when she found a new mom pumping breast milk in the women's restroom. She advocated for spaces fit for nursing and pumping. Her argument, you wouldn't eat a peanut butter and jelly sandwich in the restroom, why should you be forced to use that space to generate milk for your newborn child? Determined to better this situation, she persistently pressed for change, which eventually led to the creation of lactation facilities at her unit in California, then at Coast Guard Headquarters, and then throughout the service.

While Jennifer humbly sees all of these feats as "just doing her job," she has truly bettered the lives of many, and has done so while pursuing her personal dream of having a family. In 1997, she married now-retired Coast Guard CDR John Williams, with whom she raised three sons. She admits it wasn't always easy and praises her husband for supporting her and their family. But, she says if she had it to do all over again—Kings Point, the Coast Guard, her family—she wouldn't change a thing, except maybe to sail under that hard-earned license for a little longer than nine days.

Her success is a shining example for anyone wishing to ascend the ranks within the Coast Guard, or tackle tough positions in the marine industry. Her advice to women and men alike is, simple. "Just keep trying and never give up," she said. "Have confidence in your own abilities and prove that you can do whatever job you are presented."

Meanwhile, for industry, she believes to be on top they need to be "the employer of choice," and give everyone a chance, regardless of gender. She acknowledges that the Coast Guard has evolved a great deal during her time in the service, noting that today a woman can do any job in the Coast Guard, a difference from other branches of the armed forces. "The only place women cannot go in the U.S. Coast Guard is the men's restroom," she mused.

Captain, it is because of your contributions, and the contributions of those who served with you and before you, that women can now go "almost" anywhere in the Coast Guard. For that, we thank you. 

TO WHOM MORE IS GIVEN, MORE IS EXPECTED

# Catie Hanft

Commandant of Cadets, SUNY Maritime  
and Captain, U.S. Navy (retired)

by LCDR AMANDA FAHRIG  
*U.S. Coast Guard*

Captain Catie Hanft is a 1985 graduate of the State University of New York (SUNY) Maritime and the first female to receive a Naval ROTC scholarship. After a 27-year career in the Navy, she is now the Commandant of Cadets at SUNY Maritime in Queens, New York.

But before all of this, Catie wanted to see the world. Born and raised in Queens, New York, as one of seven children of a SUNY Maritime graduate, she harbored an appreciation for science and exploration as a student at an all girls' Catholic high school.

"Because I was about fifth down from the top of the pecking order ... my father said that he wouldn't let us live at away colleges. The only place he said he would let us live away was at a military academy. The only one I was familiar with was Maritime College because my father had come here."

SUNY Maritime was the only college Catie applied to, and she did not tell her parents that she submitted an application.

"The day my acceptance letter came ... my father and I had this long discussion about was I doing what I really wanted to do [or] was I doing this to make him happy," she said. "Despite a lot of scary things in the Navy, the scariest thing I ever had to do was go up and tell my mother that

I was going to a quasi-military academy. My only saving grace was that her hands were in a sink full of dishes."

More than 38 years later, Catie lives nine miles from the home where she and her siblings grew up. She relishes the company of her nieces and nephews and celebrating family events while remaining fully engaged with SUNY Maritime. Upon reflection, she said, "There's so much more than just a person's career."

During her sophomore year at SUNY Maritime, friends asked her to attend a meeting on Tuesday afternoons. These meetings turned out to be a recruitment drive for the college's Naval ROTC unit, which led to her submitting an application. Subsequently, she was the first female to be awarded a Naval ROTC scholarship.

When then-Ensign Hanft was commissioned in the Navy in 1985, the conventional thinking was that women could only go so far. "I even went into the Navy thinking I'll make it to lieutenant and then I'll marry a guy and he'll go on to be an admiral and I'll throw great parties and live in nice, big houses. And it turns out, that wasn't the fulfillment of my dream—I had the big houses, and I had parties."

For many years, she went by her initials rather than her name to avoid potential gender bias. She quickly garnered a reputation as a competent, professional officer upon whom people could rely. "I did anything the Navy asked me to do," she said.

Her career ultimately gravitated toward logistics, although her formal education is in meteorology and oceanography which, "The Navy never used once!"

Mentoring played a significant role in Catie's career. Although there were no formal mentorship titles along her career path, she learned something from each supervisor. "It is important that you establish relationships, and I think it's through personal example and relationships that mentorship really happens." She feels that mentoring is important across leadership positions and gender is not a factor. It's up to the person who wants to be mentored to decide who will be able to provide the best guidance.

Catie's most rewarding professional experience began in 2003 when she accepted the executive officer position





at the Navy's prison in Charleston. The prison is a level II medium security facility for men in the Armed Forces who have committed violent crimes, typically serving 2-10 year sentences. Seven months after reporting, she fled up to Commanding Officer (CO).

During her change of command reception, with less than an hour of official command experience, she faced her first challenge. One of the three recently transferred enemy combatants had decided to go on a hunger strike, triggering a national security incident. Then-Commander Hanft was able to resolve the incident without escalating or exacerbating the situation.

Her tenure as CO of the Navy's prison in Charleston was primarily focused on rehabilitation for the prisoners. She dedicated her efforts to providing them education and training to facilitate reentry into society. "We had a very low recidivism rate by focusing on rehabilitation and life skills, overcoming having a criminal record. I'm really proud of that tour even though it was very difficult."

After Charleston, Catie served as commanding officer of Guantanamo Bay's Navy prison from 2005-2006, which was a tumultuous year. "You live, eat, sleep, [and] breathe enemy combatants." This period was marked by a high rate of hunger strikes, riots, and suicides among enemy combatants which intensified an environment full of misunderstanding, fear, and heightened scrutiny.

"The idea of holding people captive was very mind-boggling for a girl from Queens. It was not anything that I had every really encountered," she said. "I didn't know anybody who had been convicted of a crime. None of my family had been involved in a crime. We had never been victims of a crime."

Throughout her career, she maintained the attitude that there were not bad people, but people who made bad decisions and needed to be held accountable for those decisions. "[Let] people make the decision of what's going to drive the next action. I think that is important for their development and their own well-being," she said.

Catie's greatest leadership lesson was learned at Charleston and Guantanamo Bay. To this day, she holds that you treat people the way you want to be treated, and never forget that with each responsibility, there's always a higher authority to which you answer.

She has now come full circle as the commandant of cadets at her alma mater. Her experience in the Navy has prepared her to engage with the cadets and guide them toward professional opportunities.

"There is nothing so bad that we can't fix it or make it better, or learn for the next time, but we have to have the time and energy to do that," she said.

Sometimes that time and energy is spent on crucial 'course corrections,' which she feels are vital to leadership development. She also recognizes that people naturally resist unexpected change. Individuals who will be

*Don't say no to an opportunity because you can always turn it into something good.*

—Catie Hanft

impacted need to be as informed and prepared as possible, especially in a world reliant on new technology and idea exchanges through the internet and social media.

She views the next generation of maritime professionals with pride and optimism. Her advice to maritime cadets is to pursue a third mates' license, which provides useful maritime education and opens the door for professional opportunity. She also encourages maritime cadets to consider able bodied or seaman positions after graduation. Graduates may feel overqualified to apply for these jobs, but Catie argues that the valuable training received from more experienced mariners can eventually lead to licensed positions.

"Don't say 'no' to any opportunity because you can always turn it into something good," she emphasized.

The experience for women in the maritime industry has slowly gotten better but there is still work to be done, Catie said. SUNY is actively trying to include more women into the regimental program. In recent years, the rate of female attendance has fluctuated between 9 percent and 14 percent, and cadets are seeing more and more women advancing into industry careers. Catie has observed that people tend to change their ideas slowly, and that patience is required.

"A lot of people fear ... that my ideas and beliefs are somehow wrapped up in a khaki uniform," she said. "I'm always willing to work with someone."

As a retired officer who recalls the 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell' era during her career in the Navy, Catie notes that the progress in attitudes does not only apply to gender, but also to acceptance of people of differing sexual orientations. She emphasizes that a genuine interest and regard for the well-being of others are keys to successful leadership of a diverse workforce.

Her mantra remains: To Whom More is Given, More is Expected.

"It may not be fair that more may be expected of us, but again, not everybody gets the same opportunities. Making the most of the opportunities, doing the hard work is important," she said. "That's how you make a name for yourself. And ask questions. There's some responsibility to pay back the opportunity. I think there's almost an obligation to do well when given an opportunity."

Through her dedicated service as an officer in the Navy, SUNY Maritime's Commandant of Cadets Captain Catie Hanft has done exactly that. //

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*In Order of Appearance*

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The Proceedings staff compiled this article from several sources, including the Eight Bells page of the Maine Maritime Academy web site.

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LT Stephanie Washington is a journeyman marine inspector at Coast Guard Activities Europe. She joined the Coast Guard in June 2009 through direct commission after graduating from the United States Merchant Marine Academy. She was previously stationed at Sector New Orleans and the Office of Design and Engineering Standards. She earned masters' degrees in naval architecture and marine engineering and industrial operations engineering from the University of Michigan and holds a third assistant engineering license of steam, motor, or gas turbine vessels of any tonnage.

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Lena Göthberg entered into the shipping industry nearly 25 years ago, frustrated with the lack of public awareness for the industry that delivers more than 90 percent of goods, she started the Shipping Podcast, which introduces her listeners to the International players in the maritime industry. With 150,000 subscribers from more than 165 countries, her podcast has become one of the most prominent of its genre.

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LT Katy Grace Coppola is a command duty officer at the Coast Guard District Eight in New Orleans. She holds two master's degrees, one in forensic science specializing in investigations and a second in homeland security specializing in safety engineering. She has been an active member of the Coast Guard's Leadership Diversity Advisory Council since its 2012 implementation.

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LT Alexandra Miller is a staff engineer in the Life Saving and Fire Safety Division at Coast Guard Headquarters. She earned a Bachelor of Science in naval architecture and marine engineering from the U.S. Coast Guard Academy and a Master of Science in fire protection engineering from Worcester Polytechnic Institute. Previous assignments include Sector Jacksonville and CGC Thetis. She is a licensed professional engineer.

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Sarah Kennedy, formerly CLIA's director of public relations, has almost a decade of experience helping organizations drive brand reputation across multiple platforms and audiences, with a globally tailored approach. From securing coverage to managing crisis communications strategies, she specializes in executive communications to capture and carry a leader's voice and message to strengthen community engagement.

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LCDR Veronica McCusker is a 20-year veteran of the Coast Guard and Coast Guard Reserve, with experience ranging from small boat operations and port security, to waterways management, shoreside facility inspections, and commercial vessel compliance. She currently serves on active duty as the program manager for the Coast Guard Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program, which prepares Coast Guard Reservists and their families for deployments in support of Department of Defense missions overseas.

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LCDR Jill Bessetti is currently District Eight's towing vessel coordinator in New Orleans. She has 15 years of dedicated service to the Coast Guard in active duty and the Reserves.

**ALLY CEDENO**

LCDR Anna McNeil is a Coast Guard cutterman, surface warfare officer, and licensed mariner who has nine years of blue water experience including several commands afloat. She is currently driving a desk in New Orleans, from which she watches vessels on the Mississippi River enter and leave the Gulf of Mexico.

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**MAYTE MEDINA**

LCDR Staci Weist currently serves as the International Maritime Organization coordinator for the United States. She served in various capacities in the ports of Mobile, Alabama, New Orleans, and San Juan, Puerto Rico, conducting marine inspections, facility inspections, and port state control. She holds a Master of Science in ocean engineering.

**MARJORIE MURTAGH-COOKE**

CDR Martha Mannion is a graduate of Newcomb College of Tulane University and Tulane Law school. She has a concentration in environmental law and began her career in the Coast Guard in 2001. Since that time she has worked as a Coast Guard judge advocate, marine inspector and casualty investigator as well as the logistics officer for a Coast Guard operational unit. She currently oversees the Coast Guard program for marine casualty investigations policy at Headquarters.

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**CATIE HANFT**

LCDR Amanda Fahrig, MBA, is a 2006 graduate of the U.S. Coast Guard Academy. Her previous tours include deck watch officer on the USCGC Active, Sector New Orleans inspections and investigations, Sector San Diego Port State control and facilities division chief, investigations industry training. She is currently program manager for marine casualties at Coast Guard Headquarters.



Lisa Lutoff-Perlo poses with Celebrity Cruises crewmembers, including Captain Maria (third from right). Courtesy of Celebrity Cruises

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The CIVMARs, who formed an all-female underway replenishment team, model Rosie the Riveter on the deck of MSC dry cargo/ammunition ship USNS Wally Schirra. Navy photo by Hiram Davies