

Interview with Chapter Past President, Ms. Madison Schultz

Q: How did you originally get involved in ASHRAE?

My boss told me that if I wanted to stay in the industry, I needed to join ASHRAE. I did and soon attended my first ASHRAE meeting and YEA event. I started volunteering because the Chapter President invited me to a Board of Governors meeting. (Thanks Joe!) I saw a need to fill working on social media. I had so much fun that I decided to stay involved.

Q: When you were working your way through the chairs, did you start to see certain subjects that you wanted to focus on?

Throughout school and my career, it was obvious that people who look like me are severely underrepresented in the industry. Although making up slightly more than 50% of the population, according to a National Science Foundation study, less than 8% of Mechanical Engineers are women. I have experienced negative comments or actions because of my gender numerous times. Whether it's my college teammate telling me to thank my husband for building my robot (I built that robot by myself), my coworker telling me that I belong at home raising my children not in the office, being mistaken for a secretary or administrative person, the look of surprise on faces when I'm introduced as the project engineer, being asked to get everyone coffee, plan the parties, passed over for a promotion, talked over, ignored, etc. Engineering has not always felt like the most welcoming place to be. It has been my mission to make it more welcoming to everyone, not just people who look like me. I want to make sure students, young engineers, seasoned professionals, sales consultants, contractors, Black, white, Latinx, Asian, male, female, or other all feel welcome in the industry. I can make sure everyone feels welcomed at least once a month at our ASHRAE meetings. (Or twice a month at YEA Events, if you are so inclined). Engineering should be a place for everyone.

Q: Once you became president, before COVID-19 hit, was the job about what you expected?

There is a whole lot more behind the scenes emailing than I was led to believe...

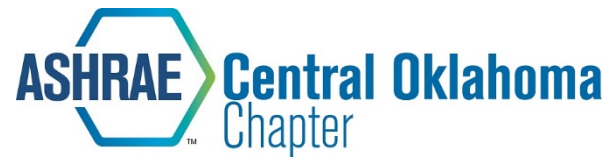
Q: After the "lockdown", what changes did you make and how were you able to stay focused on your goals when the easy way out would have been to just cancel everything?

The biggest change was shifting to a completely virtual platform so quickly. We had to, sadly, cancel a few events. But most were transitioned to virtual events. Utilizing GoToMeeting from Society and purchasing Zoom as a chapter helped keep us going. My goal for the year was Empower Members. How were members going to feel empowered and engaged if everything was cancelled? It was not even a question for me. We had to keep going. The world looks very different now than it did at the start of my term, but this is our current reality. We must make adjustments then keep on truckin'.

Q: Congratulations on winning the Golden Gavel! What does that award mean to you?

Thank you! I am very honored to accept the award on behalf of the chapter. It is the highest honor a chapter in our region can achieve. And it is a chapter award. We would not have won it without all of the amazing volunteers that we have had this year. Thank you all and congratulations on winning the Golden Gavel!

Q: You've now been Chapter President and you've already served at the regional level. So, what are your future plans for serving in ASHRAE?



I am pleased to serve as the chapter Vice President this year as well as the chapter Diversity in ASHRAE Chair. I will continue in my role as the Region VIII Regional Vice Chair for YEA this year. I have also been selected to serve as the Society YEA Committee Jr Vice Chair this year. That means that two years from now I will be chairing the Society YEA Committee. I aspire to continuing empowering others and keeping ASHRAE a welcoming place for all.

Q: What advice would you give to future ASHRAE chapter leaders?

Surround yourself with people that have a different skill set and background as you. Actively recruit and engage diverse volunteers and future leaders.

Dusty Stoabs, PE, LEED AP
ASHRAE Central Oklahoma Chapter Historian



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