

FEATURES

40 Years After: A Workplace for All

To cite this article: Alice Suroviec 2020 *Electrochem. Soc. Interface* **29** 34

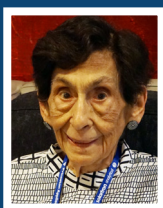
View the [article online](#) for updates and enhancements.

You may also like

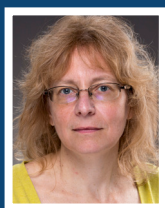
- [A review of radiation doses and associated parameters in Western Australian mining operations that process ores containing naturally occurring radionuclides for 2018–19](#)
Martin I Ralph, Andrew Chaplyn and Marcus Cattani
- [Achieving a quantum smart workforce](#)
Clarice D Aiello, D D Awschalom, Hannes Bernien et al.
- [The influence of Government's role and workforce's competence towards the construction workforce performance in Central Sulawesi](#)
Nirmalawati and Mastura Labombang



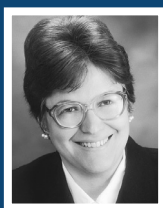
Kathy Ayers



Joan Berkowitz



Christina Bock



Kathryn Bullock



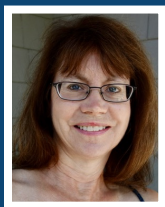
Roque Calvo



Lili Deligianni



Elizabeth Endler



Karen Hanson



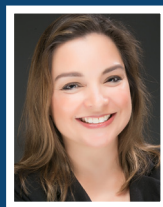
E.J. Taylor



Johna Leddy



Janine Mauzeroll



Roberta Rincon



Steen Schougaard



Carrie Shelper



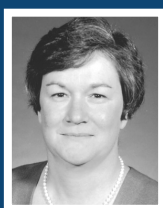
Jesus Soriano Molla



Hikari Sakaebe



Alice Suroviec



Robin Susko



Esther Takeuchi



Jan Talbot



Sannakaisa Virtanen

40 YEARS AFTER:

A Workplace for All by Alice Suroviec

Diversity and inclusion are key to the modern work environment. A recent study by *Forbes Insights*, “Global Diversity and Inclusion: Fostering Innovation through a Diverse Workforce,” produced significant findings on this. On top of the list was that diversity is a key driver of innovation and is a critical component of being successful on a global scale. According to the study, senior executives recognized that a diverse set of experiences, perspectives, and backgrounds is crucial to innovation and the development of new ideas. A second finding was that a diverse and inclusive workforce is crucial for companies that want to attract and retain top talent. The competition for talent is fierce in our global economy. As such, top employers are increasingly putting plans in place to recruit, develop, and retain a diverse workforce. Although significant progress has been made to build and retain diverse workforces, progress still needs to be made in the areas of age, gender diversity, and disability. Members will agree—The Electrochemical Society is on the forefront of diversity and inclusion.

At the 236th ECS Meeting held October 13-17, 2019 in Atlanta, a groundbreaking symposium was held on inclusion and diversity: *40 Years After: A Symposium on Diversity*. During this special event, the statement on diversity and inclusion was presented: The Electrochemical Society strives to be an inclusive organization that promotes and values diversity. We recognize and respect the rights of all, and are committed to building and maintaining a culture that encourages, supports, and celebrates the unique backgrounds and experiences of our members, volunteers, employees, and constituents. Diversity is our strength. It fuels innovation, enhances collaboration, enables our best accomplishments, brings us closer to the communities we serve, and advances our mission to promote electrochemical and solid state science worldwide. The ECS also highlighted their Ad-Hoc Committee on Diversity and Inclusion to help the Society maintain best practices and work to keep diversity and inclusion visible throughout the year, as well as increasing education of this important topic.

A major component of the symposium was the 40th anniversary of the first female ECS president **JOAN BERKOWITZ** (1979-1980). The groundbreaking efforts of Berkowitz have led to many other female leaders and female presidents of ECS. **JOHNA LEDDY** (2017-2018) and **CHRISTINA BOCK** (2019-2020) have served as mentors during my time at the Society. **KATHRYN BULLOCK** (1995-1996), **JAN TALBOT** (2001-2002), **ROBIN SUSKO** (2004-2005), and **ESTHER TAKEUCHI** (2011-2012) are among the seven female ECS presidents who also have made an impact.

Invited speakers also contributed to this symposium. **JESUS SORIANO MOLLA**, Program Director of the National Science Foundation's Partnerships for Innovation program, spoke on the challenges faced by academic institutions when trying to commercialize the output of federally funded research. He specifically spoke to the lack of diversity in many of these programs and ways that academic and federal programs can increase and support diversity. Molla was followed by **ROBERTA RINCON** from the Society of Women Engineers. Rincon spoke to the issue of women leaving engineering at their mid-career point. The data shows that more women are choosing STEM careers, but are leaving due to workplace climate and culture.

The next segment of the symposium included personal stories of women and their path to success. **LILI DELIGIANNI** (ECS Life Member) and **KATHY AYERS** (Proton Onsite) both spoke to the importance of trusted advisors, mentors, and colleagues who form a support network that can help through the lulls and setbacks in your career. **HIKARI SAKAEBE** (National Institute of Advanced Industrial Science and Technology) reflected on her experience as a group

leader in her department where there are only 10% female researchers and even fewer group leaders. **ESTHER TAKEUCHI** (ECS President 2011-2012) told her story of being a female engineer in a small company and then her move to academics. She repeated the theme of the importance of having a network of supportive colleagues and how that can contribute to persistence and success in STEM fields.

In the afternoon session, **JANINE MAUZEROLL** (McGill University) and **STEEN SCHOUGAARD** (Universite du Quebec a Montréal) shared their story as a married couple and how they have had to navigate their respective careers. **KAREN HANSON** (AT&T) and **ELIZABETH ENDLER** (Shell Technology Center) both spoke of their experiences in being the only females in engineering departments. Both agreed it was challenging, but also provided opportunities to change the climate of the workplace.

The final talk of the afternoon was by **ROQUE CALVO** (Former ECS Executive Director). Calvo discussed the growth of ECS during his 38-year career. He shared how **JOAN BERKOWITZ** being elected vice president in 1976 and president in 1979 shaped his first few years as the Society's executive director. He pointed out that the ECS community has always made diversity and inclusion a priority. The ECS community and meetings continue to offer support and mentorship.

40 Years After: A Symposium on Diversity concluded with a panel discussion. On the panel were **ESTHER TAKEUCHI**, **JESUS SORIANO MOLLA**, **KATHY AYRES**, **ROQUE CALVO**, and **CARRIE SHELPER** (Georgia Tech). The panelists discussed through experiences what specific things an organization can do to ensure it makes the best use of a diverse workforce and how to support and retain those colleagues. There was a very good discussion among the panel and the audience about the universal issues of diversity and inclusion, as well as advice for specific issues. ■

© The Electrochemical Society. DOI: 10.1149/2.F03201IF

Acknowledgments

The symposium was a celebration of the past and a look to the future. I wanted to give back to the Society by providing the same opportunity to new scientists and engineers. This symposium was a labor of love for many people. While I was the main organizer for the event, many others helped in the effort. I would personally like to thank **CHRISTINA BOCK**, **E.J. TAYLOR**, **LILI DELIGIANNI**, **JOHNA LEDDY**, and **SANNAKAISA VIRTANEN** for their help in organizing this very successful symposium. As chair of the Ad-Hoc Committee on Diversity and Inclusion, I welcome programming suggestions and invite members to volunteer their time to be a part of the committee.

“

Diversity and inclusion are growing in recognition as beneficial components in creating positive work environments and meetings, broadening and deepening perspectives in science and technology, promoting research and development and innovation, and enhancing technology.

—ECS

”

About the Editor



ALICE SUROVIEC is professor of bioanalytical chemistry and chair of the Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry at Berry College. She earned a BS in chemistry from Allegheny College in 2000. She received her PhD from Virginia Tech in 2005 under the direction of Dr. Mark

R. Anderson. Her research focuses on enzymatically modified electrodes for use as biosensors. She is currently associate editor of the PAE Technical Division for the *Journal of The Electrochemical Society*. She can be reached at asuroviec@berry.edu.

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9252-2468>