

PEOPLE, PERSPECTIVES &



PROGRESS

THE NEW FREDERICK DOUGLASS MEMORIAL BRIDGE

SPECIAL EDITION ISSUE | JUNE 2019

THE WOMEN REMAKING THE BRIDGE BETWEEN CULTURES, COMMUNITIES, AND PEOPLE



READ THEIR STORIES.
LEARN THEIR ROLES.
GET INSPIRED.

MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

As we embark upon a new spring construction season, I'm reminded of the progress we've made together to get to this point. From new roadway detour patterns to underwater bridge construction, we're giving new meaning to the term "group effort." Getting to this active phase in our journey is a reflection of the people, partnerships and diverse perspectives leading the way. These perspectives have served to inform design decisions, communications initiatives, equal employment opportunity programs, and yes - even hands-on bridge building.

Within a field historically dominated by men, it brings me great pride to know that our organization and the extended teams of organizations working alongside us are committed to living out the ideals of progress by tearing down the gender limitations that once existed in transportation.

In this issue, we celebrate an important sector of our workforce doing just that - a group as varied as they are similar - who bring new views to the concept of building a bridge. From engineers to communications specialists, trucking company CEOs, and civil rights attorneys, the women building the new Frederick Douglass Memorial Bridge show us that breaking down barriers is the first step to remaking a bridge.

Our Spring Women's Edition tells the story of a Congresswoman who secured hundreds of millions in federal funds to break ground on this historic effort, an Equity Inclusion Officer overseeing the civil rights office and making Equal Employment Opportunity her mission, a woman-owned dump truck hauling company that worked its way up from local and regional services to winning a bid on the new Frederick Douglass Memorial Bridge project - an assignment she notes as her biggest accomplishment to date.

Last but not least, get an inside perspective from our very own Mayor Bowser, the first female mayor to have been elected to a second term in the city's history and a true champion of the progress this great monument symbolizes. Read about how she sees the new Frederick Douglass Memorial Bridge impacting the people who live in, work in, and visit our city every day and what she believes women can uniquely bring to STEM fields.

We hope you'll read each story, become inspired, and develop a further appreciation for the hidden figures who make this bridge building effort one for us all to learn and benefit from.



Jeff Marootian

Jeff Marootian
DIRECTOR, DISTRICT DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

"..we hold women to be justly entitled to all we claim for men."

FREDERICK DOUGLASS

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#InHerWords Feature



FEATURE STORY

PILLARS OF PROGRESS

Pillar (noun): a person or thing regarded as reliably providing essential support for something.

Synonyms: stalwart, mainstay, strength, tower of strength, bastion, rock

The new Frederick Douglass Memorial Bridge (FDMB) is the largest infrastructure project in the history of the nation's capital. Decades of planning, preparation and perseverance have led us to this critical and present phase of building. Three women - "pillars" as we like to call them - have laid the foundation to ensure the progress and success of this historical endeavor.

Alberta Paul - A woman who has built strong, lasting relationships in the community throughout her long-standing career at DDOT.

Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton - The woman who was responsible for securing hundreds of millions of dollars' worth of funding to bring the new FDMB to life.

Mayor Muriel Bowser - The first female Mayor of the District of Columbia to serve two terms and a leading champion of progress for the District.

Learn how these women, with roles both varied and unique, are building pathways to progress in our city and for this historical project.

ALBERTA PAUL COMMUNICATIONS SPECIALIST, DDOT

Alberta Paul, affectionately known as "Ms. P." has served at DDOT for nearly 15 years. Her official title is "Communications Specialist," but her service and dedication extend far beyond that. On any given project, Ms. P. ensures that every corner of the community is reached - ANC, civic groups, individual residents, etc. - and that DDOT properly identifies the current community sentiments on a project before it is launched. The essence of her role lies in bringing to light questions and concerns of the community and making sure they don't go unanswered. She is also responsible for ensuring that the communications going into each neighborhood are clear enough for all residents to understand the work that is taking place in their communities.

Specifically, on the new FDMB project, Ms. P. interfaces with outreach consultants to inform them of the concerns from the residents impacted by the bridge being built in their neighborhoods. She assists in developing strategies to help them understand the issues and concerns clearly, reviews all of the materials created for the impacted communities, and provides recommendations for improvement.

Her role also includes coordinating widespread notification campaigns to the Maryland Department of Transportation, Virginia Department of Transportation, and the Federal Office of Personnel Management, alerting them in advance of shutdowns and lane and ramp closures, as all of these jurisdictions are impacted in some way during these events.

CONGRESSWOMAN

ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON

As a native Washingtonian and Delegate to the United States House of Representatives, representing the District of Columbia, Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton has a strong affinity for her city. Her work over the last three decades as a delegate has consisted primarily of fighting for District residents' right to have voting representation in Congress and D.C. Statehood.

What may be a lesser known fact is that as a subcommittee ranking member and a senior member of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee for the U.S. House of Representatives, Congresswoman Norton has spent more than a decade seeking and securing 60% of federal funding to build the new FDMB.

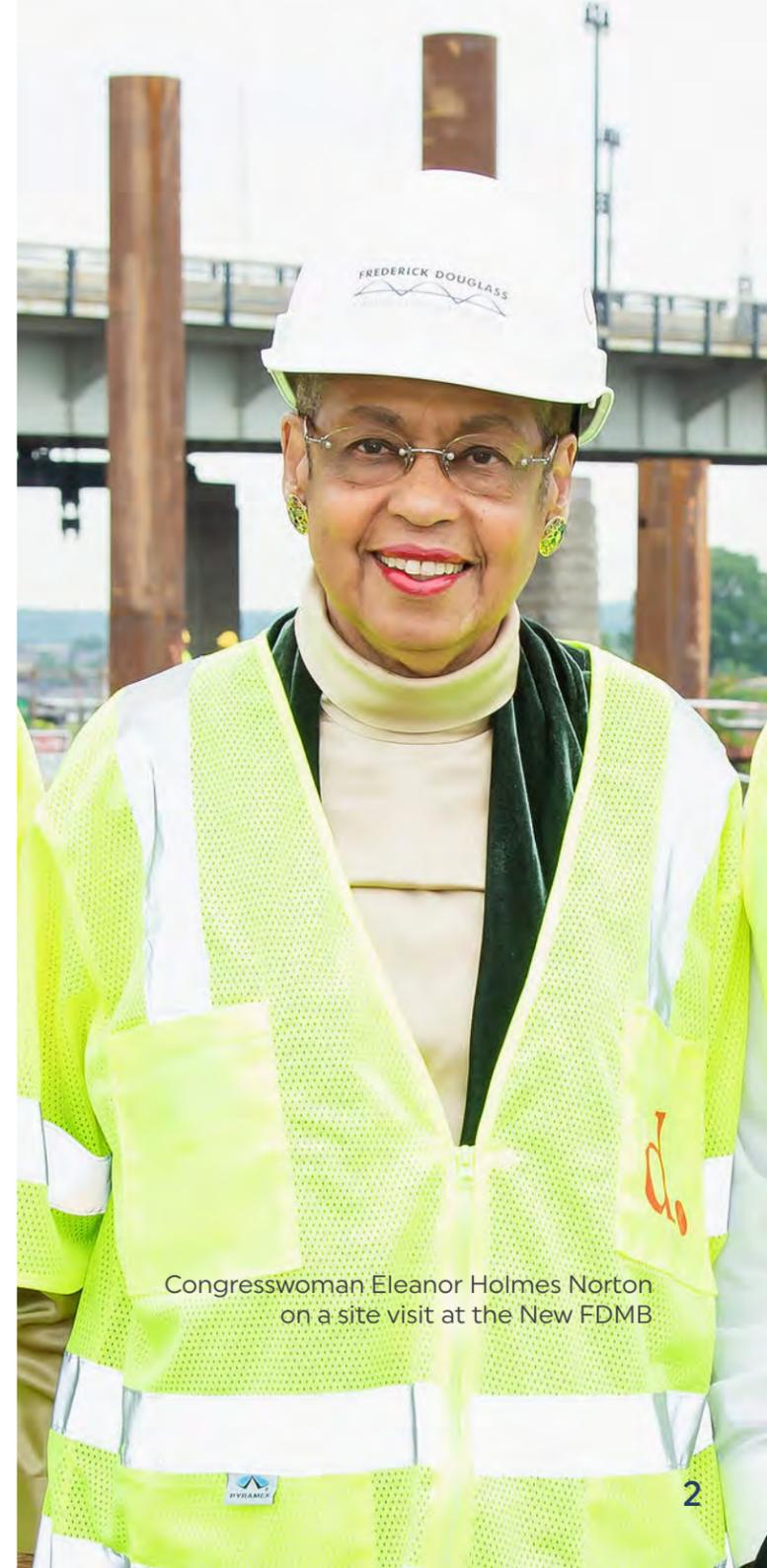
"When the founders built our city on two sides of a river, the Frederick Douglass [Memorial] Bridge became perhaps the most important bridge in the nation's capital. It connects two important parts of the city, and now tourists to the two major waterfront developments that are spurring economic growth. That's why it was imperative that I secure the appropriate funding for this bridge." - Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton

As the first woman to preside over the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, Congresswoman Norton is also very passionate about women's rights and equality. She is excited about the number of women that are currently involved in remaking the bridge and is hopeful that more women will be recruited to work on this significant project.

"As a resident of Ward 7 and a native Washingtonian, I am proud to see this bridge come to fruition. What I love most about this project are the [job] opportunities for D.C. residents to be a part of the workforce. I would love to see more young people participate. This bridge has brought all types of learning, training and employment opportunities through apprenticeships and on-the-job training programs that give young people a chance to participate on a very complex and once-in-a-lifetime type of job." - Alberta Paul

"Women will never get equality unless they break open these fields that were [historically] reserved for men. We need to do much more to encourage women to go into STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math) fields. These are fields of the future, that's where better wages lie."

-Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton



Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton on a site visit at the New FDMB

MAYOR **MURIEL BOWSER**

Mayor Muriel Bowser is the first female mayor to have been elected to a second term in the city's history and has been an active civil servant for the last fifteen years. As part of her Pathways to the Middle Class initiative, Mayor Bowser has worked to expand employment opportunities and invest in programs and policies that set more families up for success. She sees the remaking of the new FDMB as an extension of that vision.

"The new Frederick Douglass Memorial Bridge is a bridge that truly connects our city and the neighborhoods on both sides of the Anacostia River. This outstanding project will support the hundreds of thousands of people who live in, work in, and visit our city every day. Progress for us means making transportation investments that enable our city to grow, creating jobs for residents, and generating new opportunities for D.C. businesses. Progress means more Washingtonians are able to participate in our city's prosperity."

As a native Washingtonian, Mayor Bowser feels honored to play a part in the rebuilding of this memorial in honor of Frederick Douglass, a proud D.C. resident, a courageous leader, and a man who was committed to using his talents and passions to fight for what he knew was right. At the groundbreaking of the bridge in February 2018, Mayor Bowser expressed pride in being able to begin work on such an important project in the District while celebrating the 200th anniversary of the birth of this great American icon.

Mayor Bowser also applauds the numerous women who have been hired to work on the bridge in roles ranging from architecture and design to civil engineering. She believes their participation in this project is critical to the progress of the nation's capital.

"Whenever more women join an industry, everyone benefits – and that is especially true for STEM fields. Women bring with them their unique perspectives and experiences, and a broader diversity of experiences means a broader diversity of ideas and solutions. That's a good thing when we're thinking about fields that are constantly addressing new challenges and needing to evolve and think outside the box." - Mayor Muriel Bowser



Mayor Muriel Bowser at the New FDMB
Groundbreaking February 2018



SPOTLIGHT: THE WOMEN REMAKING THE BRIDGE

Left to Right: Konnie Eskender, Becky Lord, Ra'Adia Cloyd, Ariel Sayre

The new Frederick Douglass Memorial Bridge team's theme of progress is epitomized by a larger than average construction workforce made up of powerful women in engineering. We shine a spotlight on these women who each play an important role in remaking the bridge. From the District Department of Transportation, to HNTB (the construction manager), to the South Capitol Bridgebuilders (SCB)/Walsh Group (the contractor), the "The Women Building the Bridge" are pushing progress forward both for our city and in their fields.

MEET KONNIE KONJIT "KONNIE" ESKENDER, BRIDGE ENGINEER, DDOT

Konnie has been working with the District Department of Transportation for the last 17 years on the Bridges and Structures team. She received her master's degree in Civil/Structural Engineering from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. As Bridge Engineer, Konnie is responsible for reviewing bridge project submittals managed by different teams. Her role on the new FDMB project involves working closely with those teams in reviewing submittals to Bridges and Structures to ensure that designs meet contract documents including DDOT Standards, codes and design manuals.

"It is an honor for me personally to be part of the team on this iconic, complex bridge project that may come once or twice in a lifetime. To work on a project that serves as a memorial to Frederick Douglass, who was a courageous man to escape slavery and become one of the most prominent figures in American History, is pretty incredible."
- Konjit "Konnie" Eskender

Little Did You Know Fact: Konnie is originally from Ethiopia and enjoys playing tennis.

MEET BECKY REBECCA "BECKY" LORD, ASSISTANT BRIDGE MANAGER, THE WALSH GROUP

In her role as Assistant Project Manager, Becky oversees all of the temporary and permanent new FDMB pile work as well as the trestle construction. Her day-to-day activities include developing work plans and procuring materials for piling and trestle operations, managing timesheets for field operations, and overseeing field activities when questions are received. Additionally, when the team starts a new phase of work on the project site, Becky frequently meets with the foreman and superintendents on the project to determine if a plan will work before they go out in the field to execute it. She is there to ensure everyone on the team understands what the plan is and that it is realistic and in alignment with the project goals.

"I sought this project out because I knew this work would be something I could be proud of. This project has given me an opportunity to get involved in different aspects of heavy civil construction. I've been able to get into steel piling and temporary falsework for the trestle, which I was less involved in on my last job." - Rebecca "Becky" Lord

Little Did You Know Fact: Becky moved to the District of Columbia from Louisville, Kentucky on faith that SCB (Archer Western) would be awarded the job. She moved to D.C. in May 2017, and the contract was awarded in July 2017.

MEET RA'ADIA RA'ADIA CLOYD, OFFICE ENGINEER, DDOT

Ra'Adia, who serves as Office Engineer, is responsible for document control of the project. In this role, she manages the project library of internal documents and updates materials (i.e. permits) that will be used in the field. She also assists the project engineers and is part of the Document Control, Public Information and the DBE Civil Rights Task Force teams for DDOT.

"I'm looking forward to the beautification this bridge will bring to the city. I feel a sense of pride having an opportunity to see this iconic structure come to fruition. I'll get to show my parents and kids what I had a chance to be a part of." - Ra'Adia Cloyd

Little Did You Know Fact: Ra'Adia began her career at DDOT 17 years ago as a Transportation Engineer Technician doing field audits per citizen/residential requests in Ward 4. Since that time, she has served in various roles from curbside management to field inspection and auditing.

MEET ARIEL ARIEL SAYRE, SCHEDULER, HNTB

Ariel's role as Scheduler requires her to review the contractor's schedule of work and payment applications as well as handle document controls including managing processes for contractor-, designer- and owner-submitted resources, along with other office engineering tasks. She also goes out into the field to observe the project work.

"I love working with this team. Also, as a District resident, it's exciting to get to work on such an important project for the city I call home. Once the bridge is built there will be an amazing opportunity for growth in the area." - Ariel Sayre

Little Did You Know Fact: Prior to working on the new FDMB, Ariel worked in inspections and for a water treatment plant for a few years. She saw this job as another opportunity to build part of her construction management skill set.

HIDDEN FIGURES

When you think of the roles required to build a bridge, you might think of architects, designers, engineers, and a construction crew. But did you know that a bridge project, particularly one of this size and magnitude, also needs someone to handle equity inclusion and civil rights?

We introduce you to Tyra Redus, Equity Inclusion Officer at the District Department of Transportation (DDOT), and Janine Ashe, Civil Rights Program Manager at the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). While you may not have known their roles existed, they play a critical part in remaking the new Frederick Douglass Memorial Bridge (FDMB) and ensuring its success.

In her role as Transportation Equity Inclusion Officer, Tyra Redus oversees the civil rights office. She is responsible for administering the Federal Title VI programs, Title VII internal and external EEO (Equal Employment Opportunity) initiatives ensuring the hiring of women and minorities on federal contracts,

as well as the certifications of Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBE) and compliance on federal aid projects. Her role also oversees the American Disabilities Act (team) for the agency.

In addition, Tyra's office administers the On-the-Job-Training (OJT) program, which introduces and encourages minorities and women to pursue careers in the transportation and highway construction industries by connecting them with federally funded projects like the new FDMB. In this effort, her team offers resources to recruit quality candidates for the program and offer wraparound services that support them in getting hired. DBEs can also find technical assistance to help them be more competitive in acquiring contracts with the city.

Tyra is an attorney by trade but found her passion in the public sector. She is driven by seeing people - regardless of circumstance, race, age, or ability - benefit from the employment opportunities that the city's various projects offer.



Janine Ashe Fun Fact

Prior to joining FHWA, Janine was a contractor with the agency for two years. Her background is law, but she was a teacher prior to going to law school.

Tyra Redus Fun Fact

Tyra currently utilizes the bridge every day in her commute and is excited about commuting over the new bridge.



We can bring jobs, and better cross river mobility for those in Anacostia, and it is something that the communities can be proud of calling their own. Ensuring that we have DC-based businesses working on the project, particularly in Wards 7 and 8 and a workforce that reflects the community where this project is being built, that's what makes this worthwhile and so important to me.

- Tyra Redus

Janine Ashe is the Civil Rights Program Manager for the Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) District of Columbia Division office, the new FDMB's primary Federal partner. In this role, she oversees the civil rights office for her agency, which involves ensuring that nondiscrimination regulations are being carried out properly.

Janine works closely with Tyra and her office on all federal aid projects where she handles compliance with the Americans with Disabilities (ADA), the Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) program, contractor compliance, supportive services, on-the-job training, and Title VI. She provides technical assistance, conducts compliance reviews, and assists DDOT to resolve any problems that may come up.

One of her responsibilities on the new FDMB is to review and provide feedback for the OJT program to ensure that the goals of the program are being met. DDOT determines the number of trainees for federal projects, while Janine ensures that the process for determining trainees is compliant.

Janine also works on FHWA's Every Day Counts 5 (EDC5) initiative which brings research-based innovations to state transportation agencies. This past fall, Janine, along with DDOT and other DC Division staff, attended EDC5 (Every Day Counts Round 5) in Baltimore. She serves on the Value Capture EDC5 initiative working group, which introduced various mechanisms for capturing the value that transportation projects provide and to use that captured value to fund and maintain new projects.

I see my role as being responsible to the public and to ensure that public funds are being spent appropriately as DDOT's partner. Usually when I talk to members of the public, it is due to a complaint about being able to access a pedestrian walkway and it is important to listen, be patient, and have empathy and then to proactively get the situation resolved. I couldn't do this without DDOT as they do the work that resolves the problems for the District's transportation facilities.

- Janine Ashe





DBE SPOTLIGHT: DENANG'S TRUCKING LLC, DEONA HINTON

Deona Hinton, a native Washingtonian and current resident of Ward 7, started her trucking business out of necessity. She simply needed another stream of income and found the trucking industry fascinating. In 2005, upon encouragement from friends who had success in the industry, she pursued the required certification and started her business.

Her company, Denang's Trucking LLC, specializes in dump truck hauling with a particular focus in snow removal and demolition and debris hauling services. She was hired to work on the new Frederick Douglass Memorial Bridge (FDMB) project in April 2018 after receiving from a colleague an invitation to bid for the contract. Over the last year, her company has hauled away trees and dirt and transported stone to the site. Denang's will continue to haul asphalt, dirt and debris until the project's completion. She credits this project as her biggest accomplishment in business to date.

"I'm proud that I was selected because I've had so many obstacles – a lot of people have tried to discredit my services because I'm a woman. A lot of the big companies typically get projects like this, and as a female-owned business and resident of Ward 7, it means a lot to me to have this work. It speaks volumes that I was selected."

- Deona Hinton

In addition to her work with the new FDMB, Denang's Trucking LLC has provided services for the

Intercounty Connector (ICC) in Montgomery County, a road project in St. Mary's County, Oxon Hill High School, and other local and regional projects.

Prior to starting her company, Deona served more than 31 years in the Federal Government specializing in contracting and financial management. She holds a BS from the University of the District of Columbia.

Deona selected her company's name as a nod to her aunt who gave her the nickname "Denang" growing up. While she always considered the name to be odd, her thinking was that it would make it easy for prospective clients to find her company online. Her goal was to set herself apart from the competition. And that she has.

To young women considering carving their own pathway in business or any other field, she states, **"Don't allow other people to kill your dreams. People will try to put you down and make you think that it is not possible to do something that is uncommon, but continue to press forward."**

Let's Get Personal

As a resident of Southeast, Deona says she currently rides her bike over the bridge for exercise and will definitely use the new bridge once it is completed.

ON-THE-JOB TRAINING PROGRAM UPDATE

In our last issue, we featured our On-The-Job Training (OJT) Program, which provides training opportunities for women, minorities, and disadvantaged persons to increase their participation in every job classification in the highway construction industry. These jobs range from electrical technicians and cement masons to field office record-keepers and landscape workers. Here, we feature two young engineering professionals who participated in the OJT program working on the new Frederick Douglass Memorial Bridge, both of whom now hold full-time positions with AECOM, the design partner on the new FDMB.



SHELBY WALKER

As a one-month-old new hire at AECOM, Shelby joined the OJT Program to learn important aspects of bridge construction. She credits her experience with the OJT program in giving her the ability to adapt to her position much easier than most entry-level engineers. Currently as a bridge design engineer for AECOM, she assists in the design of several projects by creating and reviewing calculations and shop drawings.

"Being one of two females on the bridge team has definitely had its challenges, but being able to use that as a platform has also been very rewarding. It's made me more excited and passionate about engineering and the choices I made to get here. My advice to other young women pursuing engineering is this: Once you have started your journey as an engineer, find other women within your company and reach out. The relationships I have built with other women within AECOM have really made me more confident in my job as a bridge engineer." - Shelby Walker



BRANDI JACKSON

Brandi worked with the Tennessee Department of Transportation (TDOT) in the hydraulics division for one year before pursuing a career with AECOM. She had been working at AECOM for a few months on a stream rehabilitation project before starting the OJT program. After receiving encouragement from a coworker (now her manager) to join the program, she accepted the challenge to learn more about transportation engineering. In her current role as Civil Designer in the Transportation Group of AECOM's Franklin, Tennessee office, she performs various tasks including roadway and drainage design and hydraulic modeling.

To other women who are considering jobs in engineering she states, **"Don't be afraid to ask questions. There is nothing wrong with trying to figure things out on your own, but your coworkers are full of valuable knowledge. Be yourself and have confidence in the things you do know. If you don't know, then ask questions. Also, be an engineer because you want to be an engineer, not because someone else told you to."** - Brandi Jackson



NOTES ON HISTORY

During World War II when many men went off to war, women around the world went to work filling a labor shortage for jobs traditionally held by men. In the United States, more than six million women took wartime jobs, which included bridge building. In fact, several of the bridges in the District of Columbia were built during this time, which required a predominantly female workforce.

Most notably the Waterloo Bridge, appropriately nicknamed "The Ladies Bridge" in London was built primarily by women. Much of the history on female bridgebuilders during this time was lost until most recently when a historian named Christine Wall discovered photos from that time and collaborated with filmmaker Karen Livesey on a documentary entitled The Ladies Bridge. It explores the stories of women working on Waterloo Bridge and records first-hand experiences of a variety of wartime workers who were women.

By 1944, in London there were 25,000 women employed in the building trade and 3% of workers in construction were female. When men returned from their military posts, women were expected to leave the jobs behind in which they had worked and excelled. Despite the efforts of many women who wanted to use their newfound skills and lobbied to continue their work in rebuilding the country after the war, their requests were denied.

While there is not widespread knowledge of the contribution that women made to bridgebuilding during this era, those brave women laid the foundation for the current and future generation of female engineers, architects and builders.



Women building the Waterloo Bridge

Photos from the Daily Herald Archive/National Museum of Science and Media/Science and Society Picture Library

#INHERWORDS FEATURE

There are a number of women who are working behind the scenes on all sides of Progress for the District's largest infrastructure project in history. See what "progress" looks like from their perspective and what words of wisdom they'd share with future female bridgebuilders.



"You belong here. No matter what messages you get from your family and friends, from the news, from TV and movies, no matter if you haven't seen another woman in a hard hat before, you belong here."

- Ariel Sayre, Scheduler, HNTB



"For young professional women, civil engineering is a great field. Technology has changed the way we do things and to see now the use of 3-D modeling from surveying to design and construction, to bridge inspection using drones, it is exciting. It is rewarding because you can actually see something being built. My dream is to see more women, especially more African American women working on this project."

- Konjit "Konnie" Eskender, DDOT



"I wouldn't let being surrounded by men or being in a male dominated industry intimidate you. In this job I've been able to see a lot more women who are my peers, which has been nice. I'd love to see more women get involved in the industry."

- Rebecca "Becky" Lord, The Walsh Group



"The transportation industry is so broad and offers so many opportunities for different types of jobs and careers. I thought transportation was just about building roads and bridges. I didn't consider all the people it takes to pull it off successfully. It takes a lot of innovation, and bright minds to build a bridge. We need more representation of women in this field because it's still heavily male dominated."

- Tyra Redus, DDOT



"Now is the time for us to champion the way for the [next] generation of women to come. Engineering has allowed me to use the skills I've always possessed but never quite found the space for me to use. My career has helped me show others that engineering is for anyone that truly wants it, no matter their gender. It has given me the voice to reassure others that they too can be a female engineer."

- Shelby Walker, AECOM

THE NEW FREDERICK DOUGLASS MEMORIAL BRIDGE



REMAKING THE BRIDGE

BETWEEN
CULTURES,
COMMUNITIES,
AND PEOPLE



SPECIAL EDITION ISSUE
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We would love for
you to watch our
new video! Scan here
for more Progress! ►

