National SWE president

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Penny Wirsching ('83) takes over leadership of 30,000-member Society of Women Engineers

Penny Wirsching is the new president of the 30,000-member Society of Women Engineers (SWE). Wirsching received a bachelor's degree in civil engineering from Michigan State University in 1983.

She has been an active SWE member since her college years at MSU and has held numerous leadership roles for SWE. She became a SWE Fellow in 2007.

“I’m excited to be leading this group of incredible, dynamic, accomplished women,” she said. “We will expand the image of the engineering and technology professions as a positive force in improving the quality of life, demonstrate the value of diversity and inclusion, and empower women to achieve full potential in careers as engineers and leaders.”

Wirsching is an environmental manager for the Torrance Refining Company LLC in Southern California.

Wirsching is the second Spartan to led SWE in recent years. Betty Shanahan ('78) served as executive director and CEO from 2002-2013.

More on Penny Wirsching
Penny Wirsching, F.SWE, has had a noteworthy career in environmental regulatory compliance in the oil and gas industry, from Exxon Mobil Corporation, a major integrated oil company, to PBF Energy, a merchant refining company.

She is currently an environmental manager for the Torrance Refining Company LLC in Southern California, where she manages a team of environmental engineers responsible for ensuring the refinery’s compliance with local, state, and federal regulations.

As a single mother, Wirsching earned her bachelor’s degree in civil engineering with honors from Michigan State
An engaged member of SWE since she was a collegian at Michigan State, Wirsing became a life member in 1990. She has held numerous leadership roles at the local, region, and Society levels, leading several task forces and serving as Society treasurer and director of strategic initiatives.

She was recognized for her accomplishments by SWE in 2007 when she became a SWE Fellow.

In 2015 she received the Distinguished Alumni Award from Michigan State University College of Civil Engineering.

Wirsing is involved in her community, serving on the board of directors for Pediatric Therapy Network, a nonprofit organization that provides services to children with special needs. She is a member of Soroptimist International, an international volunteer organization of business and professional women whose mission is to improve the lives of women and girls throughout the world.

Wirsing lives in Redondo Beach, California, with her husband, Rick, and both are active members of the American Homebrewers Association.

Related Website: Society of Women Engineers
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