

Glynnis Horel

Introduction to Geotechnique?

I grew up on Salt Spring Island, BC, and knew I wanted to work outdoors. During my last year of high school, I thought I would study geology at university. A friend in engineering at the University of British Columbia advised me, "Take geological engineering. It's more interesting than geology and there are more jobs." It seemed like good advice, so I took it.

Other women in your classes?

When I started first year engineering, there were four women out of 1,100 students in the entire faculty of engineering; two in my year, the other one was in chemical engineering.

Difficulty getting your first job?

Job hunting was always a challenge for a female student looking for summer work. A number of times I was told, "We don't hire women for engineering work but we would really like to hire you as a secretary, because you know the jargon".

I did find summer work, first in civil engineering with the federal government (they assumed G. Horel was a man) and later in geology, as an assistant to a female mineral exploration geologist; we camped and worked for four months above the tree line in the Mount Waddington area of BC.

When I graduated, I only got one job offer and it was from Northern Engineering Services Co. Ltd (NESCL). Based in Calgary, I spent most of my time doing field work in the Northwest Territories. That job offer was based upon my summer field experience as a student.

Career Focus?

My focus has shifted over the years, but in general my interests include geotechnical aspects of road design, construction and maintenance, and terrain hazards and geomorphic and hydrologic processes related to forest harvesting and other land use activities.

Involvement with CGS and other organizations?

Although not currently a CGS member, I was for many years. While in the Yukon, I was very active with the Association of Professional Engineers of Yukon (APEY), and served as President for two terms, 1987-1991. On APEY Council I chaired the sub-

Education

- 1975 BSc in Geological Engineering; University of British Columbia
- 1984 MEng in Civil Engineering-Geotechnical; University of Alberta

Employment

- 1975-1976 Northern Engineering Services Company Limited, based in Calgary, AB, worked in the NWT
- 1976-1978 BC Railway, worked as a resident geotechnical engineer in northern BC (Dease Lake extension and Tumbler Ridge rail line)
- 1978-1985 Hardy Associates (1978) Ltd based in Calgary, AB, but worked in many locations in western Canada
- 1986-1992 based in Whitehorse, YK, worked as a consulting engineer then with the Yukon Government as Director of the Ministry of Transportation's Maintenance Branch
- 1992-1996 MacMillan Bloedel Ltd, based in Nanaimo, BC, worked as a Terrain Specialist all over coastal BC
- 1996-present, geological engineering consultant, primarily associated with the BC forest industry

Notable Achievements

- 1998 Watershed Restoration Award
- 1999 Forest Engineering Award of Excellence (joint EGBC/ABCFFP award)
- 2007 EGBC Professional Service Award
- 2008 Fellow, Engineers Canada (EGBC)
- 2010 Fellow, Engineers Canada (APEY)
- 2012 Honorary forest professional (ABCFFP)
- I was the first female President of the Association of Professional Engineers of Yukon (APEY) and served two terms, 1987-1991

committee that modernized the *Engineering Profession Act*.

Moving back to BC, I became very active with the Association of Professional Engineers and Geoscientists of BC, now Engineers and Geoscientists British Columbia (EGBC). I was the founding chair of EGBC's Division of Engineers and Geoscientists in the Forest Sector, and have been a member of a number of EGBC committees, task forces and joint practice boards.

Who were your mentors?

While at university, Dr. Raymond Best, a geologist, and Dr. Al Freeze, an engineer and groundwater specialist, were my mentors. During my career, two mentors who stand out are my supervisor Brian Baggott at NESCL and Bob Graham at Hardy Associates. I have been fortunate to receive advice and encouragement from many others along the way.

On being a woman in a man-dominated profession?

Of course there have been challenges, especially in the early years, and there were a few situations that I was happy to extract myself from. On the whole, I have been very well treated, not only by my professional colleagues but by all of the people that I have come into contact with through my work.

Advice to other women?

My advice to both men and women: get involved in technical societies such as the CGS and in your professional associations. Such involvement really helps your professional and personal development.

Quote about Glynnis Horel

On being awarded an Engineers Canada Fellowship from the APEY in 2010:

"Glynnis' membership in the Association [of Professional Engineers of Yukon Territory] and her election to Council were firsts for any woman. The trail she blazed, in both government service and service to the Association, has since been followed by many others. Although the profession still has some distance to travel in terms of achieving gender balance, there must be leaders that get things started. There is no doubt that Glynnis Horel was the first of those leaders in the Yukon." (Wally Hidinger, Yukon Highways and Public Works)

Photographs



In the field in 2006



Glynnis in 2018