

## **Full interviews from our Winter 2015 newsletter, including:**

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Director, Center for Infrastructure Systems and Technology  
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Independent Consultant**

## **“Women Are the Best Part of My Life”**

### **An Interview with Jacquie Moloney Chancellor, University of Massachusetts Lowell**

*By Nicole Lynch, CWW Emerging Scholars Student Coordinator*

Jacqueline Moloney is the newly-appointed chancellor of the University of Massachusetts Lowell—the first woman chancellor of this university. I was fortunate to have the opportunity to interview Chancellor Moloney on behalf of the Center for Women & Work near the end of her first 90 days. She enlightened me about her professional career and her goals and beliefs as chancellor of UMass Lowell.

Chancellor Moloney shared that she feels strongly connected to her identity as a woman and its social and political implications.

“I have always said that women are the best part of my life. I’ve been very fortunate to be in a large family of women,” said Chancellor Moloney. “Unfortunately, they grew up at a time when, especially for my older sisters, college was not an option for them. They should have gone to college and they never had that opportunity. But they were smart and they pushed all of us.”

Chancellor Moloney added that she was fortunate that when it came time for her to attend college, the feminist movement was coming to life and she had the opportunity

to attend UMass Lowell. “I think that absolutely, fundamentally changed my life forever. There were a lot of strong women here who reached down to me as an undergrad, like you, and said, ‘You can be everything you want to be.’ I was just so lucky to have that experience.”

The chancellor and I also share the experience of belonging to feminist groups on campus. I’m the vice president of a club called F.R.E.E. (Feminism Represents Equality for Everyone) and Chancellor Moloney started the first women’s center at UMass Lowell. She stated: “If I wasn’t a woman, I wouldn’t have gotten to know all of those great women who challenged me, stretched me and taught me to keep going. I think, going forward, I’ve been lucky to have wonderful colleagues who are women and who feel it’s our duty to support each other and to lift us all up collectively.”

I asked the chancellor if she was familiar with the book, *Lean In* and author Sheryl Sandberg’s theories that careers are like a ladder or a jungle gym (one is straight up the career ladder, one is made up of varied professional experiences).

“I would put myself in (Sandberg’s) parents’ generation, let me just say that. So I’m not sure that works for women of that generation. There was no ladder. There was no ladder for me. There was no ladder for her mother, I’m sure. I came up through the ranks and I was the only woman in the room just about all of the time. I had to find my own path and I think that was true for most women.”

Chancellor Moloney gave me a book, Mary Catherine Bateson’s *Composing a Life*. The author, she explained, “talks about how women compose a life. By the nature of who we are and how our lives are organized, we have to compose a life like composing a symphony, where you have to think about the best use of the instruments when you bring them in. You frame it in terms of what your skills are and what your strength is right now as a woman.”

Chancellor Moloney faced critical points in her career when she had to make choices, the biggest of which was to take a break and have children.

“It was a big deal and so I chose—but that was part of composing a life,” she said. “I had great confidence that if I followed my passions then it would work out. And it always did for me.”

She described how, when she was staying home to care for her children, she found other ways to pursue her interests. “We started a women’s conference in Lowell called Womenenergy. So I didn’t have to let go of my passions, I just did it in a different way.”

As Chancellor, Jacqueline Moloney holds the belief that education should include applied learning and together, students learn skills they can use to make the world a better place.

“We provide a very unique education to our students.” She said “There’s no better way for you to stretch your mind than to not just read about a policy, learn a policy, but to really understand it in an applied way.”

As an undergraduate at UMass Lowell, she majored in sociology, a course of study that changed her thinking about some things and taught her “that it is your responsibility to go out and make this world a better place.”

Since Chancellor Moloney started her career as a social worker and director of nonprofits in Lowell, she knows “the power of you, and you, and unleashing that power.”

As chancellor, she wants to stress applied learning by students because “it’s really about students who are making a difference, applying their learning and making a difference” and that the university will continue to create opportunities for students to pursue applied learning.

Additionally, Moloney wants to focus on “how we tell our story” as a university because she believes that “we are changing the world through teaching, research and service” and she wants to “empower students and faculty to make a difference.”

By interviewing Chancellor Jacqueline Moloney, I learned that she has succeeded in composing a life that is uniquely her own. She was involved in the community through direct work with disadvantaged populations. She gave back, in incredible ways, to the university at which she completed her undergraduate and doctoral degrees and where she worked for many years in a variety of roles, so much so that the previous chancellor asked her to be his second in command. She has served and continues to serve on the boards of multiple community-focused organizations and has been involved in grassroots community organizing. She’s a staunch feminist as well as a mother and grandmother. And, most important for the future of this university, she has carried her community focus with her in her appointment as chancellor. Chancellor Moloney knows the value of community work through direct experience and she believes wholeheartedly in affording students the opportunities to learn that value for themselves.

## **“There Is Nothing Like Being Part of the Fabric of A Community”**

**An Interview With Isa Woldeguiorgis**

**Executive Director, The Center for Hope & Healing, Inc.**

*By June Lemen, CWW Strategic Communications Specialist*

Q: Tell me a bit about The Center for Hope and Healing.

A: The Center for Hope and Healing was previously known as Rape Crisis Services of Greater Lowell. In 2012 we changed our name to reflect the non-crisis work we do to prevent sexual violence and to educate the community. The Center for Hope and Healing's mission is to support the healing and empowerment of survivors of rape and sexual assault through counseling and advocacy, to educate individuals and systems and to organize communities to eradicate sexual violence. CHH serves Lowell and 14 communities in the greater Merrimack Valley. The vision of CHH is a world free from sexual violence.

I am so excited to share that in 2016 we are celebrating our 40th year anniversary! I've been the Executive Director for nearly four years.

Q: What's your background?

A: I came to the Center for Hope and Healing after working for over twenty years in the anti-violence movement. Before CHH, I worked in the child welfare and domestic violence field for over a decade, I worked at the state DV and SA coalition and was a national-level trainer and advocate. But I wanted to work and make a difference in a community; there is nothing like being part of the fabric of a community. That's what I wanted and that's why I came back to Lowell.

Q: You knew Lowell?

A: I knew Lowell. I worked as an advocate for alternative sentencing for substance-abusing women in the 90's. Back in the 90's there were areas of the city that were like combat zones. But when I returned, all that had changed.

A: So things were different?

A: Things were far better in Lowell when I returned than they were when I had left: the Lowell Renaissance had happened. I wanted to work in Lowell, because I like being part of a community and I like cities. I grew up in NYC and I like being able to hear many languages spoken while walking down on the street; I like seeing multiple generations walking around and living in the same area; I like being in an area with many different cultures. I have an affinity for this area—it feels like home.

Q: What's it like being the head of an agency in such a diverse community?

A: It's wonderfully rich and also a challenge. It should be required of all of us to create a full team—staff, board and volunteers that is reflective of the community. If you are going to be a part of the fabric of the community the number one question you need to ask is: who do you have to have at the table? Who are we? Who's

missing? And even to ask yourself these questions you have to have conscious awareness of the mission of your organization.

We serve on average 400 survivors a year, through our 24 hour hotline, individual and group counseling and advocacy services. We are here 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. We offer medical accompaniment and advocacy. We will go to the hospital with a victim or to the police. We offer legal advocacy and support groups.

Q: It sounds overwhelming. Is it cyclic?

A: Sexual violence happens around us all the time. Who hasn't been "cat called" or inappropriately touched in public? What do we see in the media everyday about women's bodies and sexuality? 80% of sexual assaults go unreported. In terms of reported sexual assaults there are peaks and valleys. Unfortunately some of them do align with college—assaults increase in September through December. We have a good relationship with UMass Lowell, though, and they support us in getting out the word.

We do lots of community education and outreach—we've made 1200 individual contacts in the community this year—either at community events, workshops, trainings and dissemination of materials. We go to local festivals, college fairs, churches, cultural events—wherever there are people we can educate and build relationships with.

Q: Do you think women are different from men in terms of leadership?

A: Women bring both assets and challenges to leadership. What women bring to the table is a combination of hard skills and life experience, along with cultural norms and strong community relations in management styles. But women also bring technical skills, as well as skills in mentoring: both creative and innovative types of mentoring. I feel strongly that mentorship is key in the professional development of women of color.

Q: What are some of your specific challenges as Executive Director of The Center for Hope and Healing?

A: The challenges include juggling all of the people at the table. There are board members and funders, Center staff, the community and colleagues —each person has their own personality, and has a job to fulfill for themselves and the people they bring to the table.

Part of my role is to figure out how to reach across the aisle of difference when people are not in agreement with each other. Another part of my role is to work with all the variables that come up in the course of a day.

Q: And raise funds! I know that when I have been on boards, fundraising is your number one job as a board member.

A: Yes, fundraising is a key to a successful board and it's a constant challenge. We raise funds in ways that support our mission and at the same time create awareness. It is always inspiring to see our supporters give back because they have seen firsthand how our services change lives and create hope and healing. We have received support from volunteers, board members, survivors and their loved ones. Every dollar really does make a difference. I believe if you are going to accomplish any goal, you need to focus: you need to stay grounded and steer your own course.

Q: You said before that you feel mentoring is key for women of color.

A: I do feel that way. I have a small circle of mentors and individuals whom I am mentoring. Part of the problem is there are limited opportunities for brilliant women of color to step in to—well, did you hear Viola Davis's speech?

Q: The one at the Emmys?

A: Yes. The one where she talks about what separates women of color from anyone else is opportunity?

Q: Yes, I did hear that.

A: Well, she was absolutely correct. I am not so sure that there are that sufficient opportunities for women and women of color, so I ask myself: how do you take a student's passion—in administration, in finance, in progressive politics—and bring that into the workplace? How can I create opportunity? How can we at CHH create opportunities? And I realize there are essential qualities shared by all women, including women of color.

Q: What are they?

A: Our leadership skills are not just theoretical. They are practical, day-to-day skills. Women—especially women of color—share an experience of living with our own various identities and navigating through a world that doesn't always value those identities.

In some ways, you can call what we have a compass. You can call it having empathy. You can call it groundedness. But we use it by navigating and negotiating difference to create material benefit. My grandmother and your grandmother did it. They negotiated their worlds to raise their families, keep children alive, build homes and businesses. That's real: practical concrete day-to-day skill in any environment. And that's what we bring to the table.

Q: So you take those skills—negotiating difference, having empathy—and you apply it where you are?

A: Yes, vision, drive and empathy. I call it leadership.

## **Leading the Fight to Eliminate the Wage Gap**

By *Evelyn Murphy, Ph.D., CWW Advisory Board Member*

**President, The WAGE Project, Inc.**

**Resident Scholar, Women's Studies Research Center, Brandeis University**

For over a decade, I have single-mindedly pursued one goal: the elimination of the gender wage gap. My motivation is both personal and professional. On a personal note, my father had his first heart attack when I was 12 years old. I believed from that day on, that I would be responsible for financially supporting my mother and sister when I grew up. Since none of my family ever graduated from college, I raced through undergraduate and graduate school to prepare, earning a PhD in economics by the time I was 25 years old.

I became aware of the wage gap in my college jobs. I learned male friends earned more than I did even though we were all "interns". From then on, I watched through decades as professionals assured women that the wage gap would eventually disappear. Didn't happen. We're not even half way there.

My experience in government showed me what government can and cannot do. Government can lead by example. Yet, legislation will never solve this problem simply because, as a society, we will never allocate sufficient public dollars to regulate the wage gap out of existence. Individual employers may eliminate their own wage gap, but most employers do not see the wage gap as a significant threat to their business.

To eliminate the gender wage gap requires large scale action by both women and employers. That's why I founded The WAGE Project, Inc. to energize masses of women to negotiate to get paid what they are worth and large numbers of employers to pay their women employees fairly. Boston's Mayor Marty Walsh is the only public official in America demonstrating large scale civic engagement on both fronts under the direction of his Office of Women's Empowerment. WAGE is deeply engaged in this Boston initiative with the expectation of extending the model elsewhere in the country in the next few years.

Knowing that this activism can and will eliminate America's gender wage gap, I am as energized today as when I published *Getting Even: Why Women Don't Get Paid Like Men and What to do About It* ten years ago.

## **Getting It Done**

### **Lisa Brothers**

#### **CEO, Nitsch Engineering**

Lisa A. Brothers, PE, is the President and CEO of Nitsch Engineering — a firm that specializes in providing civil engineering, land surveying, transportation engineering, structural engineering, green infrastructure, planning, and GIS services. Nitsch Engineering also specializes in attracting and retaining women engineers: women make up 38% of the engineering staff at Nitsch.

Nitsch is known as being an excellent firm to work for and in 2014 Lisa won the EY Entrepreneur Of The Year™ Award in the New England region's services category. The award recognizes outstanding entrepreneurs who demonstrate excellence and extraordinary success in such areas as innovation, financial performance, and personal commitment to their businesses and communities. We wanted to find out what drives Nitsch's CEO.

Lisa is passionate about UMass Lowell—and engineering and wage equity—as well. She was a commuter student her freshman year; but found commuting isolating and difficult. Determined to live on campus for her sophomore year, she interviewed for a space in an off campus apartment on Merrimack Street. When she received her room assignment, she was not put into same apartment as her friends — instead she became the housemother and got her room and board free.

Immediately after graduation, she went directly to graduate school at Northeastern University and got an MBA. She met her future business partner, Judy Nitsch after she left the public sector. When Judy left to found her own firm, Lisa joined her as her first employee. Twenty-six years later—they have built an outstanding company! During our Women's Works event, I was able to ask Lisa about her career.

Q: “Do you feel that Judy mentored you?”

A: “Definitely. And she still does and I also mentor her.”

Q: “So what's your advice about leadership?”

A: “Be authentic. I feel that how you lead comes from who you are. For example, I am not really eloquent. I'd love to be, but's that's not who I am. I am direct, for one thing and I jump around a lot when I talk — not literally, but topically.”



Q: “How did you get interested in engineering?”

A: “I hate to sound like a stereotype, but I was a tomboy and was always outdoors. In school I was good in math and science, but oddly enough it was my typing teacher who said, ‘You should go to into engineering’. My mother was a widow — my dad died when I was 11. There was really no money for higher education, so I went to UMass Lowell because it was affordable.”

Q: “And engineering was what you majored in?”

A: “Yes. And I was very purposeful about my career. I decided to get my MBA right after I graduated —I knew that I was going to need that business training.”

Q: “And how did you come to be at Nitsch?”

A: “I joined Judy. She left the company we were working together at to start her own firm and I wanted to work with her., which is another thing that I feel strongly about — you have to create your own opportunities. When Judy left, she couldn’t recruit people to come work for her—she had a non-solicitation. When she announced she was leaving to start her own firm, I followed her into her office and said, “Not without me!” I created that opportunity for myself; you need to make sure that you jump at things that make you stretch. Make yourself uncomfortable. As a leader, it is my responsibility to push people into uncomfortable roles.”

A: “You have to make progress. And one of the ways you ensure progress as a leader is by being approachable.”

Q: “It strikes me that you are probably very approachable. You’re *not* one of those managers that it’s difficult to tell bad news to.”

A: “It’s interesting that you should say that, because people I work with have said that, too. I’m pretty direct, and since I think that the most important thing is to be transparent, I think being approachable is part of that, even when you have to give people bad news. And you also have to stretch. You have to stretch yourself and the people who work for you because not being challenged and engaged—in my opinion—leads to people leaving. Managers should nudge people more, in my opinion.”

Q: “What else do you think managers should do?”

A: “I know what they shouldn’t do: micromanage. People do not become autonomous, which is necessary for leadership, if their managers micromanage them. And women in leadership should avoid Queen Bee Syndrome: women should always reach up – or down – or out – to other women.”

Q: “Can we talk about your company’s gender make up? And wage equity?”

A: “38% of the engineers at Nitsch are female. Women come to us. There are very few female engineering firms with female heads. “Back in the early years of the company we had to find out about wage equity through the outside. Judy and I were being paid at 45 and 55% of what our male peers (CEOs and COOs of other engineering firms) were being paid.”

Q: “What did you do?”

A: “We gave ourselves raises. And then we did a survey of the industry and made sure we were paying the men and women at our firm — who had the same qualifications — equivalent salaries.”

Q: “Is there anything else you do to ensure a steady flow of women into engineering?”

A: “We hold an ‘Introduce A Girl to Engineering Day’ at Nitsch during National Engineer’s Week. It will be February 26<sup>th</sup> this year. We started doing this 14 years ago. We explore a different engineering discipline every year. Over 100 girls attend for half a day session. The girls are from 6<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grade. It’s very gratifying, and several years ago one of our new graduate hires was a woman who was introduced to engineering at Nitsch on ‘Introduce A Girl to Engineering Day’.”

Q: “The EY Entrepreneur Award must have felt quite good.”

A: “Yes, and during the prep for the award, I had to find out what my personal business brand would be. I talked to friends and colleagues, and it was ‘Gets It Done.’ I felt it was accurate, because as a manager and leader, I feel that you need to be productive. You’re going to run into problems, but you have to keep moving forward.”

Q: “That’s how you get things done?”

A: “It’s the only way you can get things done.”

**Julie Chen, Ph.D.**

**Vice Provost for Research, University of Massachusetts, Lowell**

One of the most vexing questions in higher education today is this—why aren't there more women in academic leadership roles? To find out, I asked Julie Chen, the Vice Provost for Research at UMass Lowell, what she thought some of the reasons might be, in a brief Q & A.

“If we are talking about research center leadership, it seems that many times the teams are created by who knows who, so networks are key to getting more women in academic leadership. Women aren't always as well-connected as men. For example, in the case of STEM chair positions, the number of women in STEM who are full professors is small to start with. At UMass Lowell, the chair positions are elected by the faculty, so that adds another layer of complexity.”

Q: “UMass Lowell has been particularly successful in having women in academic leadership roles. What has helped us to be successful here?”

A: “I think that we have strong women leaders who serve as role models and are supportive of other women; we also have strong men leaders who are supportive of women.”

Q: “What lessons have we learned that might be helpful to other institutions of higher education?”

A: “I think that all institutions need to actively ask women if they are interested and encourage women to apply or take on leadership positions.”

Q: “What factors might dissuade women faculty from being attracted to leadership positions as currently designed?”

A: “Significant time commitment, for one. Also, the expectations and reactions from other people are still different for women and men—in terms of management and leadership style.”

**Luisa Paiewonsky — ‘There are No Neat Narratives’**

**Director, Center for Infrastructure Systems and Technology**

**Volpe National Transportation Systems Center, U.S. Dept. of Transportation**

Luisa Paiewonsky joined the U.S. Department of Transportation's Volpe National Transportation System's Center in 2011. She is currently the Director of the Center for Infrastructure Systems and Technology. She is the former Commissioner of the Massachusetts Highway Department and Highway Administrator of the Massachusetts Department of Transportation.

Q: How did you get into transportation?

A: I have loved highways since I was a kid. And when I was in college, a family friend worked for the Department of Public Works (later the Massachusetts Highway Department), and she offered me an internship. I interned with her the summer after my junior and senior years. After graduation, I served three years in the U.S. Peace Corps and then re-joined the Highway Department, eventually working my way up through the ranks.

Q: So interning is important? What do you think about mentoring?

A: Interning is important, and we have lots of them here at the Volpe Center. I view mentoring as an obligation, and I encourage the people I mentor to become mentors themselves once they get settled in their careers.

If they see themselves as just taking in knowledge, that's not enough. They need to see themselves as leaders and talented professionals in their own right, even if they are still not at the career level they want to be at. It's not just CEOs who should be mentors. At every stage of their careers, people should look for opportunities to mentor others-and continue to be mentored themselves. Anne Aylward, who is the Associate Deputy Assistant Secretary for Research/Deputy Director at Volpe, is someone I view as a mentor and role model.

Q: How do you choose whom you mentor?

A: Well, right now I've just had the first meeting with a young woman as part of the formal mentoring program at Volpe, but with the other people I mentor, I let them approach me. They ask questions and I let them know that I am available to talk. They can call me to bounce ideas around — or if they want to discuss how to balance their lives and careers, I'm willing to share my experience.

Q: You've been a woman leader in a government agency that is traditionally a stronghold for men: transportation. Do you see being a woman leader in a non-

traditional field as any different from being a leader in any field? Particularly when you are trying to introduce new kinds of solutions to problems? Do you think that the issues for leaders have changed over the past 25 years?

A: There is clearly more emphasis now on work-life balance, whereas previously there was a more stringent divide between professional and personal lives. I think that the value of having a diverse workplace is that it's harder to be stuck with old values when you're watching the new values develop right in front of you. When there's no real balance — say, you have to miss a critical meeting to take care of your kids, there may well be consequences for your job. The good news is that we have more choices these days, but that doesn't make the choices easier.

I've experienced that personally. When I was Highway Commissioner I had to leave that job because of family needs. I have no regrets about that decision, but it was really difficult because I loved the work and my colleagues were a great source of support. People assume that there's a 'neat narrative' where everything balances out reasonably. Narratives are not necessarily that neat in real life.

Q: Do you think that your career is different from that of other women in traditionally male-oriented fields?

A: I am not sure. I've never worked outside transportation and I think that part of the reason I've had such a good time is that I work with engineers. Engineers are all about finding solutions for problems. They work well with my management style. I'm not an engineer myself, but I've worked in transportation for 25 years and I love working in teams that are focused on solutions. I am a planner by background and I think it's important to bring in a mix of disciplines and perspectives.

Q: Is there anything else you'd like to add?

A: I think that one of the reasons why I've had such an enjoyable career in a traditional male stronghold is that transportation is, by its very nature, a collaborative process. There's planning, design, permitting, building — no one person can do it all. Women leaders bring a lot of value by realizing the job is collaborative, and the work isn't done until the construction is complete and the project is successful. The team and the project are bigger than anyone's individual skills.

## **Judie Post**

### **Independent Consultant**

Judie Post has worked for a number of government, non-profit, and corporate entities. As a consultant in strategic planning, fundraising, organizational development, human resources, she has advised all types of businesses, but specializes in working with not-for-profit organizations.

Judie has owned a number of small businesses, including Andover Personnel, Clarion Consulting Group, The Finishing Touch and Designer Consigner. Prior roles in industry include positions with Hewlett Packard and General Electric as manager of employment and training.

A graduate of the University of Massachusetts, with a Bachelor of Science in Sociology and Master of Arts in Community Social Psychology, Judie has continued to pursue up-to-date information in her field through certification in Human Resource Management from Babson College and Healthcare Risk Management from the New England Health Care Assembly. Current memberships include: the Association for Fundraising Professionals, American Psychological Association, American Society for Training and Development and positions on the Boards of Directors for several area non-profits.

“I have had a career in both the profit and the not-for-profit worlds. I have owned my own businesses: businesses supported mainly by women. These experiences as a business owner have also helped me to advise non-profits.

What I find to be true is that women welcome the chance to talk about their unique situations, which is an observation that I brought to my work with an employment agency, a jewelry store and, more recently, a consignment shop. Being a good listener, with just the right amount of encouragement, information and empathy is what makes for a good connection with the women I have been lucky to have served in these businesses.

In terms of the consulting work, the skill I bring is mainly seeing the big picture and helping people take a step back and look at the situation from that perspective, rather than focusing on the small stuff. That, and sharing what I know and helping them to transfer that to their situation.”