

# Bold, modern *and dynamic*

## Woman in Mining: Resa Furey

*This issue's Woman in Mining profile is an example in strength mentorship and constant learning. NAM learns more about her mission to educate, elevate and empower.*



**R**esa Furey has said she has a mission to make a positive difference for women in the industry. As an active member of groups like Women in Mining, SME, CIM and PDAC, along with her role as mentor to many across the mining community, it's safe to say mission accomplished – and she's far from being done making her mark on the industry.

Armed with a B.S. in marketing and an M.S. in journalism and communications, Furey first entered mining as a marketing specialist for an engineering and environmental firm. Today, she serves as director of Marketing, Mining, Minerals and Metals for Stantec. *NAM* recently asked her to share her start, her motivations, and her views of the future.

### **Can you share a little bit about how you got into mining and why?**

I didn't set out to work in mining, rather mining chose me.

Early in my career I did marketing for an engineering and environmental consultancy that was later purchased by Stantec. After some time, the mining group recruited me, and I have stayed in mining ever since. Once I learned how to add value to the mining group, I loved it. I was (and remain) excited by the scale of mining operations and the variety of the work.

Since every mine is different, every project we work on is unique. All of this requires a lot of strategizing and thinking – who doesn't love opportunities for learning! In addition to the interesting challenges of the job, given Stantec's global footprint, I've had the opportunity to travel to Latin America, Australia and Africa. International travel is typical in mining and for me, it has been a 'cherry on top.'

I've stayed in mining because I was offered opportunities that stretched me as a professional. For example, early in my career I led a global investigation into the state of alternative tailings disposal for Stantec. The study culminated in trips to mines in Chile and Australia to see the filtered tailings operations. This was many years ago and investing in this type of a research initiative was way ahead of its time.

Parallel to my day job, I'm very involved in Women in Mining, SME, CIM and PDAC and find this work very rewarding. (I'm lucky that Stantec also prioritizes giving back to the industry). This involvement has allowed me to work with people from many countries and different companies. Interesting, rewarding and enjoyable work is like fuel for me. It's what gets me out of bed in the morning!

So, like many women, I got into mining by accident, but I stay intentionally.

### **What is the best part of the mining community, in your opinion? New technology? Sustainability efforts? Something else?**

Mining is a small and friendly community that I'm honored to count myself a part of. I'm a believer that the world is filled with great people and mining definitely has its share.

Looking forward, things I'm excited about within the industry are – the new technologies that are being developed and deployed. When it comes to technology our industry has long had a fast follower mentality, but I see that changing and, in my opinion, ESG and net zero goals are driving the change.

Incorporating technology into our mines and companies is shifting the industry's mindset from fast follower to leader. It's making the industry bold, modern and dynamic – it's a very exciting time for the industry.

### **What do you think of the progress of women in the mining industry? How can companies support women in mining?**

Women have made progress in mining – there are more women than ever in the industry and many of us are at higher levels within our organizations. The number of women on the boards of mining companies has also increased. Despite that, the progress has been slow and there is much more to do to attract and retain women and diverse individuals.

I firmly believe as the industry begins to embrace new technologies, so too will it improve its diversity, equity and inclusion (DE&I) statistics. Just think about it, new technologies require different skills and tech savvy people, this leads to hiring tech savvy people and digital natives. As the mining work force is transformed by the incorporation of tech into our mines and our companies, DE&I will benefit. The two go hand-in-hand.

We know the value of diversity, yet what's missing for mining is that we're not great at becoming and remaining diverse. That still eludes us. Because of this, just focusing on diversity is no longer enough – we have to know how to include diverse individuals. We need to learn how to make these individuals feel seen, heard, known and valued.

### **What are your goals for yourself in the industry?**

I want to make a positive difference for women in the industry.

My goals are the same as the Women in Mining Canada goals to 'Educate, Elevate and Empower' women.

Early in my career, I thought a lot about the concept of the invisible backpack. This is the idea that men have invisible backpacks, backpacks that they don't even know they have, full of tickets and keys that magically open doors. The backpack leads to advantage blindness – a lack of conscious awareness of one's own advantages in life relative to the life experiences of others who are different. Increasingly, white women leaders have what I call 'invisible handbags.' We all need to recognize our privileges and find ways to put these advantages to collective good use for the industry and beyond. We can assist in making positive change for women and diverse populations, and to a certain extent, it is our responsibility to do so.

### **What goals do you feel the industry should be setting for itself?**

I'd like to see the mining industry put its money where its mouth is when it comes to improving its image. Poor public perception of mining has been a challenge forever and yet, as a whole, the industry hasn't made the investments needed to improve its image.

Yet mining can do big things ... think about the cyanide code – the voluntary program to improve cyanide management practices in the production of gold. It was a huge win for the industry. A more recent example is the GISTM – the Global Industry Standard on Tailings Management – the framework to prioritize safety throughout the life of a tailings facility. These are just two examples of what the industry can achieve with a little focus.

A simple messaging program about the need for mining, minerals and metals – something like 'if you can't grow it, it has to be mined' – would go a long way.

I'm not saying changing public perception will be easy, I'm just saying a sustained investment could make a difference.



*Resa Furey with Amanda Adams, holding a very cool copper anode replica.*



*Above the Cerro Corona tailings dam in Peru.*



*With Victoria Gosteva, Rebecca Siwale and Donna Schmidt during MINExpo.*