

Gavel Passes to Youngest President in Society History

Kodi Verhalen, P.E., Esq., F.NSPE, was installed as NSPE's 2016–17 president in June at the Professional Engineers Conference in Dallas. She is the youngest professional engineer and the third woman to serve as president since the Society's founding in 1934.

Verhalen is an associate in the energy section at the law firm of Briggs and Morgan, in Minneapolis. In this position, she works with many PEs, engineers-in-training, and engineers on large energy infrastructure projects, both from a regulatory and an environmental perspective. Prior to joining Briggs and Morgan, she was an environmental engineer for a Minnesota electric utility company.

Since 2001, Verhalen has been an active member of both the Minnesota Society of Professional Engineers and NSPE. As an undergraduate, she started MnSPE's first student chapter at the University of Minnesota-Duluth. A year



KODI VERHALEN, P.E., ESQ., F.NSPE, ADDRESSES THE NSPE HOUSE OF DELEGATES IN SEATTLE LAST YEAR.

after graduating she was elected to the MnSPE executive committee, advancing to the position of MnSPE president in 2010. Her leadership roles with NSPE have included membership on the board of directors and House of Delegates as well as chair of the Membership Committee, the Bylaws Review Task Force, and the Position Statement and Professional Policy Development Task Force.

Her honors and awards include MnSPE's Young Engineer of the Year and the Omega Chi Epsilon Chemical Engineering Honors Society—Beta Zeta. She was named a fellow of NSPE in 2012.

Verhalen is also active in her community, serving on the planning committee for FashionFest for the University of Minnesota Masonic Children's Hospital and providing support to Community Aid Elk River. Additionally, she mentors students and young engineers on the value of engi-

neering licensure and the importance of giving back to their profession.

She received her bachelor's degree with honors in chemical engineering from the University of Minnesota-Duluth and a juris doctor cum laude from William Mitchell College of Law in St. Paul. She is licensed to practice law in Minnesota state and federal courts, and Wisconsin state courts, and is a licensed PE in Minnesota.



As MATHCOUNTS champion, Edward Wan (left) won a \$20,000 college scholarship and a trip to US Space Camp.

Washington Mathlete and Texas Team Triumphed At MATHCOUNTS Finals

Seventh-grader Edward Wan of Bellevue, Washington took home the top prize at the 2016 Raytheon MATHCOUNTS National Competition in May by answering the question "What is the remainder when 999,999,999 is divided by 32?" His correct answer, 31, came in just 6.95 seconds.

The Texas team—with members Andrew Cai, Luke Robitaille, Benjamin Wright, and

Justin Yu—also came out on top. All four Texas team members qualified for the Countdown Round, a MATHCOUNTS first.

MATHCOUNTS is a nonprofit organization that strives to engage middle school students of all ability and interest levels in fun, challenging math programs. Its yearly competition involves more than 100,000 students.

NSPE is a founding sponsor of MATHCOUNTS and many Society members volunteer. The 2014–15 competition series included 4000 volunteers from local and state NSPE chapters.

Learn more about MATHCOUNTS at www.mathcounts.org.

Looking Beyond Ourselves

BY PRESIDENT KODI JEAN VERHALEN, P.E., ESQ., F.NSPE



Change. Innovation. Shift. Something made different. An alteration.

Every July brings change to NSPE. We swear in our new officers, directors, and delegates. We review and approve a new budget. We set out new goals and charges for the Society and our committees, interest groups, and task forces. But, no matter what change we see in these activities, there are core principles that hold true year after year.

We are committed to advocating for and protecting the professional engineer's license in every state and territory in the United States. We remain committed to our 54 state and territorial partners. We hold firm in our commitment to increase the awareness and appreciation for the professional engineer's license among licensees, nonlicensed engineers, and the public. In these actions, we continue to pursue the foundational principles set forth by David Steinman in 1934 when he and a dedicated group of professional engineers founded NSPE:

- Protect professional engineers (and the public) from unqualified practitioners;
- Build public recognition for the profession; and
- Stand against unethical practices and inadequate compensation.

NSPE has spent nearly half a decade taking a deep and critical look at our operations and governance through our Race for Relevance efforts. We have made some remarkable progress in these efforts and have a stronger and more vibrant organization because of them. We have looked introspectively at our house and put it in order. We have cleaned the cobwebs, purged much of the clutter, and now we are operating on an assumption and work load closer to maintenance rather than the complete overhaul we have focused on since 2012.

It is time for NSPE, our leaders, and our members to look outward and beyond ourselves. It is time to look at professional

engineering as a whole and what we can do to leave our mark, to make a difference. As a profession, we need to ensure the public understands our necessary but often unnoticed role in protecting the public health, safety, and welfare; and we need to continuously build the trust that gives us our special status as licensed professionals.

We must embrace change and find the best way to maintain our highest standards as professional engineers while also providing our services to our employers, clients, and society in the best, most efficient, and highest-value ways available.

It is also time for the profession to look more closely at our role in developing technology. As technology changes, the expectations of the public change and we, as professional engineers, must make sure we remain able to respond to these changes. We cannot become an obsolete profession, and we also cannot respond to these changes by just saying, "But it's always been done this way." That attitude is sure to be the fastest path to irrelevance.

We are engineers. We are taught the importance of being innovative. We must embrace change and find the best way to maintain our highest standards as professional engineers while also providing our services to our employers, clients, and society in the best, most efficient, and highest-value ways available. But this may also mean changes to the profession to attract and retain the best talent.

This year, NSPE will convene a task force to perform a focused evaluation of the future of the profession. Core to that

evaluation will be many of the concepts set forth by Richard and Daniel Susskind's book *The Future of the Professions: How Technology Will Transform the Work of Human Experts*. The key theme of the Susskinds' critical evaluation of the professions is this: "Professionals play such a central role in our lives that we can barely imagine different ways of tackling the problems that they sort out for us But the professions are not immutable. They are an artefact that we have built to meet a particular set of needs in a print-based industrial society."

In undertaking its evaluation, the task force will be asked to critically analyze the four key questions presented by the Susskinds:

- Might there be an entirely new way of organizing professional work—ways that are more affordable, more accessible, and perhaps more conducive to an increase in quality than the traditional approach?
- If we concede that humans are indispensable in professional work, does it follow that all the work our professionals currently do can be undertaken only by licensed experts?
- To what extent do we trust professionals to admit that their services could be delivered differently, or that some of their work could be responsibly passed along to nonprofessionals?
- Is the traditional arrangement granting special status to the professions actually working? Are our professions fit for purpose and are they serving our societies well?

These questions are provocative and they are meant to be provocative. It is important that we, as professional engineers, are able to answer all of these questions.

Watch future editions of PE magazine this year for more information on NSPE's efforts to evaluate the future of our profession and updates on the work of the Task Force on the Future of the Profession.