



Penny Wirsing has been selected to receive the 2019 Lansing Community College Alumni Association Distinguished Alumni Award. Wirsing has had a long career in environmental regulatory compliance in the oil and gas industry. She is currently Environmental Manager for the Torrance Refining Company. She serves as the president of the Society of Women Engineers (SWE), a 40,000 member professional organization that promotes the advancement of women in engineering in the United States and around the world. She became a SWE fellow in 2007, and received the Distinguished Alumni Award from the Michigan State University College of Civil Engineering in 2015.

Speaking about her Lansing Community College (LCC) experience, Wirsing says, "Growing up in the small town of Mason, Michigan in the 1970's I expected to follow in the footsteps of all my female role models and be a stay-at-home mom, and I did, until I found myself a divorced mother with a high school education at the age of 18. It was at this time that LCC entered the picture and changed my life."

Thanks to the Comprehensive Employment and Training act, she was able to begin her studies at LCC, and in 1979 receive her associate degree in Business Management. She continued her education at Michigan State University where she earned a bachelor's of science in Civil Engineering and Masters of Business Administration from the University of Washington.

She is currently 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. She has also worked in several similar roles for Mobil and ExxonMobil.

As the president of SWE, Wirsing has had the opportunity to travel to many diverse destinations abroad and meet with current and aspiring engineers in areas such as China, India and Europe. She has been an engaged member of SWE since she was a student at Michigan State University, and has held numerous leadership roles at local, regional and Society levels, leading several task forces and serving as the Society Treasurer and Director of Strategic Initiatives.

"I owe a debt of gratitude to LCC for providing ready accessibility to classes at reasonable costs that allowed me to earn an engineering degree and, in turn, launched me into a career that I previously couldn't have imagined," states Wirsing.

In addition to SWE, Wirsing is involved in her community, serving on the Board of Directors for Pediatric Therapy Network, a non-profit organization providing services to children with special

needs. She is also 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 with her husband, Rick, and both are active members of the American Homebrewers Association.

Wirsing will be presented with the award at LCC's Commencement that will be held on May 9, at MSU's Breslin Student Event Center.