



**FEATURED
emPOWERed WOMAN
INTERVIEW**
**Felecia Etheridge
CPS Energy**

Felecia Etheridge is the Chief Customer Engagement Officer for CPS Energy, charged with ensuring intentional, consistent, exceptional experiences for both customers and communities and responsible for customer services, community services, sales, corporate communications, marketing and smart city initiatives. Felecia previously worked at TXU Energy and PG&E, and recently was awarded the San Antonio Business Journal Women's Leadership Award recognizing her as a leader in her field and the community and as an agent of positive change.

Felecia, How do you describe what you do to your friends who don't know about the complex energy industry?

FE: I lead the team at CPS Energy that is responsible for ensuring that our customers have a meaningful customer experience that delivers value and enriches their lives.

How did you come to work in the energy field?

FE: I never planned to work in the energy field. I have a degree in International Marketing from Texas A&M. I was certain I would end up as some sort of marketing 'guru' for a large consumer package goods company. However, I interviewed with an energy company just for practice. I knew a little bit about the industry because I worked at a small municipal utility company in my hometown. After the interview, I received a job offer – in fact, it was the only job offer I received. So, I accepted it rather than starve. I thought I'd stay in the industry 2-3 years, and then move on to some big marketing job. Thirty-five years later, here I am.

Describe a challenging moment in your life and how you overcame that obstacle.

FE: My husband of 25 years passed away unexpectedly a month after I had accepted a leadership position half-way across the country. I knew I had two options: curl up into a ball or keep moving forward. It was the hardest thing I've ever had to do, but I put my head down, kept putting one foot in front of the other and when I eventually looked up, I had made progress. That experience changed me forever – it taught me to be crystal clear about work/life balance, and

to have a laser focus on professional issues that matter – cut through the clutter.

What are your thoughts about how the industry has evolved?

FE: During my time in this amazing industry, there have been many changes. First and foremost, there are significantly more women in the industry now as opposed to when I started. Most women back then taught customers how to cook with electric appliances. In fact on my first day, the first question to me was, "What are you going to cook for us?" My colleagues were amazed when I said I wasn't going to cook. I was a field customer service representative doing energy audits and high bill complaints.

The energy industry today has a much stronger focus on customers and meeting their expectations. We have realized we must compete for customers – if not directly in an open market, then for their opinion of us. Our customers compare the experience that they have with us against the last experience or interaction that they had with other companies, and they evaluate us against that. Understanding that has been a significant change for this industry. Customers are much more informed and sophisticated than ever before. The evolution in energy sources and ownership, as well as behind-the-meter services was just a point for discussion when I started and now look where the industry (and customers) are headed.

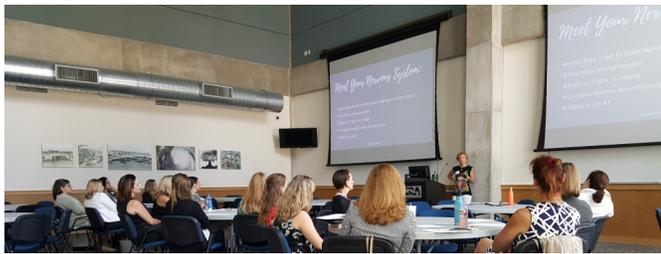
What achievements are you proud of and what do you attribute the success of those to?

FE: The achievements or successes that I have had are directly attributed to the team around me. I am a firm believer if others around you are successful, you will be successful. That's how I measure myself. If my team is successful and meeting the goals that they have set for themselves, then my success will take care of itself.

The achievement I am most proud of is the opening of the retail electric market in Texas. I was fortunate to lead an amazing team that helped define many of the retail market rules and protocols, and it is very gratifying to see that the Texas market continues to be successful.

What advice would you give to women trying to achieve leadership roles?

FE: My best advice to women trying to achieve leadership roles is to go for it. Trust yourself and find your own authentic style. Don't wait for all of the details to be defined before you take on a position – ambiguity is good because that means you get to set the parameters of success and make the role your own.



June 2017 Workshop on Empowering an Inclusive Workplace Brings Women Together in Austin

Jennifer Rochelle, certified life coach and Senior Energy Consultant with Customized Energy Solutions, led a workshop on Empowering an Inclusive Workplace on June 21, 2017 at the LCRA Redbud Center in Austin. A group of 20+ women attended the workshop where the touchy subject of how to respond to inappropriate comments in the workplace was brought out in the open. Ms. Rochelle gathered real-life stories prior to the workshop and then guided attendees in developing “canned” responses for future encounters. Ms. Rochelle also led the group in a lively discussion on the ways that women can become advocates for themselves and other women.

Due to popular interest, the Empowering an Inclusive Workplace workshop will be offered in Houston later this fall. Stay tuned for that announcement.



GCPA emPOWERing Women Hosts TAMU Students in Houston

On September 14, the GCPA Empowering Women Committee held a "Women In The Electric Power and Energy Industry" event at Constellation Field in Sugar Land. The event introduced 17 outstanding women in the Texas energy market to women economics students from Texas A&M. Cherie Fuller, lead organizer for this year's event said, "A lively panel discussion was followed by animated one-on-one exchanges between students and executives. The students came prepared with specific questions that ran the gamut from work/life balance to wanting to understand how physical power flows work. All participants left feeling energized and excited for the future state of our industry!"

Planning for the GCPA emPOWERing Women 4th Annual Leadership Conference Is Underway

MARK YOUR CALENDAR NOW for the 4th Annual GCPA emPOWERing Women Leadership Conference on Wednesday, January 17, 2018 at the ATT Conference Center in Austin. Pre-conference activities including a half-day workshop will take place on Tuesday, January 16. Registration will open in October. Watch your email for further information.

OTHER UPCOMING GCPA AND GCPA emPOWERing WOMEN EVENTS

2017 Fall Conference Golf Tournament - Sponsored by GCPA emPOWERing Women
October 2nd, Avery Ranch Golf Club in Austin
[Registration Now Open](#)

2017 GCPA Fall Conference
October 3rd - 4th, The Renaissance Arboretum in Austin
[Registration Now Open](#)

2018 GCPA 5th Annual MISO South Conference
February 8th, Pan American Conference Center
New Orleans
Registration Opens in November

2018 Spring Conference Topgolf Networking Event - Sponsored by GCPA emPOWERing Women
April 16th, Topgolf in Houston
Registration Opens in January 2018

2018 GCPA Spring Conference
April 17th - 18th, The Hilton Americas in Houston
Registration Opens in January 2018

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Join the GCPA emPOWERing Women LinkedIn Group: Interact with other women, post items of interest and keep up with GCPA emPOWERing Women events – [CLICK HERE](#) to join.