



March
2021

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT



WoW Member: Rebekah Antoine
Hometown: Seattle, Washington
Current City: Long Beach, California
Current Job: Sr. Contracts Administrator, Curtin Maritime
Alma mater: National University 2007
Whittier College 2004
Degree: M.B.A., B.A.

Rebekah is currently the Senior Contracts Administrator for Curtin Maritime and a WEDA Pacific Chapter member. Women of WEDA (WoW) invited Rebekah to be a featured member this month because of her role as an accomplished and enthusiastic female leader in the dredging industry. Her responses to our questions both inspired us to become better versions of ourselves as professionals and also to better appreciate the connection we at the WoW have to one another.

WoW: To get us started off, why did you join WoW?

Rebekah: I joined to have a community of strong women who have navigated this industry before me and can help show me the ropes so to speak. Because we work in an industry that is not necessarily geared towards our success it helps to be a part of a sisterhood of amazing women blazing trails.

WoW: I love that phrase – “sisterhood of amazing women blazing trails!” It is so true for us. Speaking of the industry, tell us a little about your work life, where did you start and what is your role at Curtin Maritime?

Rebekah: My first job ever was at my father’s bookstore (Blackbird Books) back in Seattle in the 90’s. At 10 years old I was barely old enough or tall enough to see over the counter. The first adult job I had I worked in the warehouse of a greeting card distributing company and hand rolled wrapping paper for 8 hours a day. A real character builder of a job. As the Sr. Contracts Administrator at Curtin, I have a key role in helping to garner new business. I lead a team of great people who comb through specification after specification and tender compliant bids. Work life, as hectic and challenging as it can be, has pushed me so much professionally and in the best ways. I really attribute my personal and professional growth to all the lessons, both good and bad, that I have learned at Curtin Maritime. We are a dynamic group of intelligent individuals who love what we do at Curtin Maritime, love working for Martin Curtin, and willingly come into work and grind it out every day. It’s a wild ride.

WoW: I know we can all relate to a hectic work life. What does your typical day look like? What are the various ‘hats’ do you wear throughout each day?

Rebekah: For one there is no typical day but I start everyday with my mom hat. I have a 13yr old, so a work-life balance is a major struggle some days. Lately I only wear one hat at work. I’m contracts compliance tasked with the preparation and submission of our construction and transportation bids and proposals, as well as responsible for our pre-construction and post-construction contract management and compliance all day every day.

WELCOME

Women of WEDA (WoW) was founded to create both an empowering and a safe space for women, women-identifying people, or anyone who considers themselves to be in the minority. Our goal is to work with our members to help facilitate networking, discuss issues, and gain advice from others in the sector who work/live in similar situations.

For more information on WoW or to sign up for events, visit

<https://www.westerndredging.org/index.php/weda-social/women-of-weda>

Upcoming Events

March 26, 2021 – Zoom Webinar:
Navigating the Water Treatment Design and Permitting Process
<https://www.westerndredging.org/navigating-the-water-treatment-design-and-permitting-process-webinar>

June 15-17, 2021 – Zoom Webinar:
Dredging Summit '21
<https://dredging-expo.com/>

Past Events to Revisit

Great Lakes Regional Beneficial Use Testing Manual - Watch online & view presentation slides
<https://www.westerndredging.org/great-lakes-regional-beneficial-use-testing-manual-webinar>

Innovations in Dredging Webinar - Watch online & view presentation slides
<https://www.westerndredging.org/innovations-in-dredging-webinar>

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT, Rebekah Antoine

WoW: I am sure many WoW members can totally relate to there being “no typical day” and starting their day with their “mom-hat.” How would you say that your past professional and academic experiences and lessons prepared you for the contracts compliance work you do all day every day?

Rebekah: I am the product of my past experiences and lessons I’ve both willingly and unwillingly learned, so it has all contributed to help me do the work I do today. It’s easier said after the fact, but even the hard lessons were necessary. I believe the most growth happens when we are being tested.

WoW: So true! That said, what would you say is your biggest career milestone?

Rebekah: My industry knowledge. I came into the Maritime industry not even knowing what a tugboat was and now I know more than I ever thought possible. I consider it a huge accomplishment to have gained so much knowledge in a short amount of time.

WoW: What is the gender ratio like in your industry? Do you see it evolving? Why or why not?

Rebekah: According to the Maritime Institute of Technology and Graduate Studies (MITAGS) it is estimated that women represent only 2% of the world's 1.2 million seafarers and 94% of female seafarers are working in the cruise industry. So, the question for the industry is more so what is the value in evolving to include more women? I personally see the value as infinite. And mainly because we can do anything the boys can do.

WoW: Absolutely! How would you say being a woman has affected your professional experience? What do you think we could do to create more equal, uplifting spaces for women in your industry?

Rebekah: Within my current industry it hasn’t affected me at all. I’m blessed to be at a company that values women just as much as men so that has never played a factor here. In my previous roles though being a young woman of color was oftentimes seen and treated as three strikes against me and in those spaces it was a constant uphill battle.

I think the solution is more women in the boardroom as they say. Seeing women, or anyone that looks like you, in a position of power goes a long way in not only boost your confidence but leads to sustainability of career. I think women are more likely to stay at a job where the trail has been blazed already.

WoW: Wow that is so wonderful to hear about the culture at Curtin! We’re getting close to the end of our interview here, so I’m going to ask you a fun one – Who is the person you most admire and why?

Rebekah: Easy. My mother. After my father passed away, she made sacrifices on her children’s behalf and never complained while doing so. I could never repay her for the years of support and constantly putting herself last so in my eyes she is not only remarkable but an absolute superwoman. Not enough credit and praise is given to single parents and she deserves all the recognition for the woman I am today.

WoW: And what a remarkable woman you are; I can only imagine what an extraordinary lady she must be! Okay, last question, do you have any career or life advice you’d like to share with the members of WoW to achieve their goals?

Rebekah: Advocate for yourself. There is no one more invested in your future than you, so invest wisely.

WoW: Thank you so much, Rebekah. Any final thoughts you’d like to share?

Rebekah: I think organizations like Women of WEDA go a long way to creating spaces for more women to join. It helps immensely to know there is a large group of women that I can reach out to or bounce ideas off of that have been where I’m at. I hope to provide that sort of guidance to women coming behind me as well.

Rebekah is an incredible presence and someone who is a joy to be around and discuss anything with from her interest in having coffee with Stephen Tyler from Aerosmith to the intricacies of tugboat operations used for the dredging industry. If you’d like to learn more, you can reach her at rantoine@curtinmaritime.com or on linked in at: [linkedin.com/in/rebekahantoinezimbabwe13403](https://www.linkedin.com/in/rebekahantoinezimbabwe13403)

DATES TO REMEMBER

31 March 2021 – Mentorship Applications Close - <https://www.westerndredging.org/index.php/education-portal/mentorship-program>

2 April 2021 – WEDA Young Professional of the Year Award – <https://www.westerndredging.org/index.php/awards/weda-young-professional-of-the-year-award>

30 April 2021 – 2021 Safety Excellence Awards - <https://www.westerndredging.org/index.php/safety-awards>

30 April 2021 – Mentee Applications Close - <https://www.westerndredging.org/index.php/education-portal/mentorship-program>