

Deborah Lynn Hopen (1953-2020): She Shattered the Glass Ceiling



ASQ Past President Deborah Lynn Hopen passed away quietly on Palm Sunday, April 5, 2020. Her life was a role model for the contribution of women to the field of quality management and provides a profound example of how one person can shape the future. Deb had been trained as an engineer, statistician, and psychologist and became an ASQ Certified Quality Engineer in 1991. She worked for industry as a quality executive at Weyerhaeuser and Xerox and managed her own consulting company for over 20 years. Deborah served as Editor of ASQ's *Journal of Quality & Participation* since 2000. Most importantly, she was thoroughly professional in her work and provided an exceptional example for dedicated service to her profession. She dedicated her career to quality and was selfless in her devotion to the Society through her work at the section, region, division and national levels. Deb was the first woman to be elected as President of ASQ (1995) and she remained exceptionally active in the quarter century following her leadership term. In 2010 she was elected by ASQ as a Fellow and subsequently she was elected by the International Academy for Quality as an Academician. Perhaps some of the stories of her activities that have not been widely published would help people to understand the breadth and depth of her contributions to our community:

- In her 40 years of quality management experience she taught statistics, statistical process control, quality management, production management, and production costing at the university level.
- She held elective positions of responsibility at all levels of the ASQ organization from Section Chair to Division Chair to Chair of the national organization.
- From July 1995 through June 1997, she served as President and Chairman of the American Society for Quality. She also has served as President of the Washington State Quality Award Program and the International Standards Initiative. Deborah was also involved leading numerous Washington State cultural and charitable organizations.
- Upon the merger of the Association of Quality & Participation with ASQ in 2001, she served as the APQ-to-ASQ Transition Manager in wrapping up operations in Columbus, Ohio and transferring the work and intellectual property for inclusion within ASQ.
- An avid writer, journalist and 20-year editor of the ASQ *Journal of Quality & Participation*, Deborah has accumulated over 200 written papers in various ASQ publications.
- Deborah remained active at the section, divisional and national level over the past 20 years working in her local sections, and several divisions (Healthcare, Human Development and Leadership, Lean

Enterprise Division, Quality Management and Six Sigma Forum) in a variety of largely thankless tasks (newsletter editor, author of bylaws, policies and procedures, and treasurer were her most frequent activities). Her focus was dedicated to service in the quality community.

- Although Deborah preferred to remain out of the limelight, she nevertheless received accolades that her many friends supported. Among the honors and awards presented were:
 - ASQ Distinguished Service Medal
 - American Productivity and Quality Center's C. Jackson Grayson Quality Pioneer Medal
 - IAQ Founders Medal
 - IAQ Agnes Žaludová Woman of Quality
 - Asia-Pacific Quality Organization Miflora M. Gatchalian Medal for Women in Quality Leadership
 - American Society for Quality, Quality Management Division Roger Berger Spirit Award
 - Frank M. Gryna Award for Excellence in a Written Article on Quality Management
 - Simon Collier Quality Leadership Award

Needless to say, Deborah Lynn Hopen became the "First Lady of Quality" as ASQ's pioneering female president and exemplary role model of professionalism throughout her career. Not only can she be seen as a role model for women in quality, but she is a role model for all professionals for what dedicated service to her profession truly means. She will be missed greatly.

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