



2024 SGA Awards Finalists: Chair's Rising Leader

Entry: Amazing Mentorship: Kristin Cox

Your Company: Baltimore, Gas, and Electric

Who would you like to nominate? Kristen Cox

Please describe how this person is driving excellence in the natural gas industry.

Kristin has been a gracious mentor, offering her valuable time and extensive experience to guide my development. Throughout our interactions, she has shared valuable insights regarding the intricacies of the utility sector and effective methods for managing complex workloads. Her leadership skills and inclusive approach have expanded my knowledge and expertise in the industry, enabling me to pursue new challenges in my professional journey.” Those are just a few words from one of Kristin’s ten mentees. Kristin is passionate about elevating women in her organization alongside her professional success. She is steadfast in her commitment to establishing and retaining relationships while also keeping the door open to those who seek her out. At one point in time, Kristin was the only female engineer in her division. As a young employee in a male-dominated profession, she worked tirelessly to ensure she had a voice, was taken seriously, and that innovative thoughts were able to push forward. Even before she entered formal leadership, Kristin had extraordinary business impact and now uses her influence to expand the way the business moves forward.

Kristin has led an initiative at Baltimore, Gas, and Electric since 2018 to achieve equality and equity for women in the workplace through strategic partnerships with employee resources groups to raise awareness of negative biases impacting women. Her initiative strives to advance women through recruiting and offering programming that focuses on professional and personal development while empowering employees to have a voice and ensuring they are heard. She truly believes that empowered women are an essential part of delivering safe and reliable service to customers. Under Kristin’s leadership, this initiative in 2023 sponsored a weeklong camp for young women in partnership with the National Association of Women in Construction (NAWIC), attended five local Baltimore City school career fairs, sponsored five personal and/or professional development panel discussions, and recorded two podcasts’ series focused on male allyship. Kristin has been sought after at the corporate level to join the Women’s Leadership Development Advisory Council, where she provides feedback to an enterprise-wide team of human resources partners developing training and initiatives to increase female representation across the business. If her dedication to internal employees was not enough, this past year Kristin also became a mentor for Exelon’s Foundation STEM Academy. Every month,

Kristin actively mentors two to three young women in high school from the greater Baltimore area on everything from career pathways to interviewing skills and work-life balance. She has come a long way since that solo young engineer. Over the past five years, Kristin has been proud to be a part of welcoming her former female interns into full-time roles and actively recruiting to expand the talent pool at BGE. Today, Kristin's division currently has eleven female engineers, and Kristin brings them together over lunch every month to discuss professional and personal development topics of their choosing. Currently, the team is focusing on the future of Gas. She ends each vowing to ensure they are never left to feel alone.



Entry: Tyler Tunic

Your Company: Williams

Who would you like to nominate? Tyler Tunic

Please describe how this person is driving excellence in the natural gas industry.

Tyler has been actively contributing to excellence in the natural gas industry throughout his 10-year career. Through his involvement in the Southern Gas Association (SGA), Interstate Natural Gas Association of America (INGAA) Foundation, Young Pipeline Professionals (YPP) USA, and Young Pipeliners International (YPI) his passion for natural gas industry advocacy is apparent.

At Williams, Tyler has held various positions across the organization from project engineering to commercial optimization to pipeline control. He currently manages the Air Compliance and Emissions Reduction team within Williams' environmental group where he and his team are tasked with the "E" of Williams' Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) efforts. Tyler's leadership plays a crucial role in advancing sustainable practices and minimizing environmental impact in the natural gas industry. Last year, he led the development of a white paper that examined the cost, emissions, and security complexities in electrifying pipeline compression. This paper has been praised by our CEO Alan Armstrong as a tool to dissuade against blind electrification policy and has been presented at conferences across the US in 2024 and shared with local, state, and federal regulators.

While Chair of Young Pipeliners International (YPI) from 2020-2021, he led the development of new regional YPP groups in India, China, Malaysia, and Nigeria. Tyler then served as Chair of Young Pipeline Professionals USA (YPP USA) from 2021-2023 where he led knowledge sharing, networking, and collaboration among emerging pipeline professionals and cemented their annual Symposium as the premier event for young professionals in the industry. In 2024, Tyler had the honor of being voted onto the Board of YPP USA.

Tyler embraces the need for the natural gas industry to lead the way into the energy future through the attraction and retention of young professionals into the industry. Through the INGAA Foundation, he has championed numerous industry advocacy projects from industry message testing to the development of industry advocacy engagement tools. His efforts have produced consistent natural gas industry messaging for industry employees to use that is directed at various target audiences and assists to eliminate obstacles for industry employees to be public advocates. Tyler was invited to be the guest speaker to share these efforts at the January 2024 SGA Accredited Natural Gas Executive (ANGE) cohort session and will be presenting to the SGA Executive Council this Fall.

Tyler has brought these advocacy efforts back to Williams where he was instrumental in starting an Ambassadors program for Williams' employees, developing an intranet "starter kit" for

employees to advocate for our industry and spearheaded introducing advocacy sessions within our Volunteer Week and Day of Caring programs.

Tyler's commitment to operational excellence, environmental stewardship, and industry advocacy exemplifies how young professionals can make a significant impact in the natural gas sector. He has the unique capability of bridging the industry challenges and solutions that span across his professional and volunteer interests. Tyler is duly qualified for this prestigious award as he has proven both his commitment to his professional career and contribution to the community of young pipeline professionals.



Entry: Blake Villarrubia

Your Company: Audubon Companies

Who would you like to nominate? Blake Villarrubia

Please describe how this person is driving excellence in the natural gas industry.

My exceptional contributions to the pipeline industry include professional achievements at Audubon Engineering and active involvement in YPP USA, SGA, and the INGAA Foundation. These contributions make me a strong candidate for this recognition.

My leadership at Audubon Engineering is evident in my growing role and responsibilities at the company, particularly in managing critical pipeline replacement projects on one of the oldest pipeline systems in the U.S. My ability to handle emergency replacements to ensure uninterrupted gas and power services to key customers showcases my strategic thinking and crisis management skills. Accomplishments also include developing a world-class estimating tool that helps clients better understand their capital and operating costs for carbon steel pipeline alternatives of various sizes. Additionally, I have helped lead natural gas companies understand markets and opportunities while supporting them in developing pipeline routing models for clean alternative fuels helping our industry to position itself for future growth opportunities.

Beyond Audubon Engineering, my leadership extends to YPP where I have been a committed officer and ambassador for the organization for over 5 years. My involvement in YPP is extensive and multifaceted. I have steadily increased my responsibilities within the organization and currently serve as the Industry Chair. Current responsibilities include overseeing all industry organization collaboration, corporate sponsors (i.e. midstream natural gas and liquids providers) and advisors, and University relations for YPP. In this role, I am responsible for multiple workgroups impacting over 250+ YPP members directly.

After some initial success as a Community of Practice Workgroup Member in YPP I was nominated as YPI Secretary. There, I managed an organization with 10 member regions across the world and grew it over 40% during my term. This directly resulted starting young pipeline professional organizations in China, Nigeria, India, and Malaysia. This demonstrates my commitment to inclusivity and the global growth of young professionals in the pipeline sector. Next, I brought my leadership, passion, and drive into other YPP workgroup lead roles where I was able to foster the growth and recruitment of approximately 300 new YPP members, as well as drive meaningful expansion with over a dozen trade organizations in the pipeline industry. I was recently awarded the 2024 John Tiratsoo Young Achievement Award at PPIM for my efforts within YPP and beyond.

I currently sit on SGA's Executive Council and Next Generational Leadership Committee. As a member of this committee, I contribute key insights and strategic plans within SGA and across the industry to enhance collaborative and inclusive workplaces. Through my efforts in SGA, I have hosted several sessions regarding talent attraction, retention, and knowledge transfer at various SGA conferences, and am currently helping to assemble and kickstart a Young Professional Taskforce.

In conclusion, my achievements at Audubon Engineering, extensive contributions to YPP, impactful presence in SGA, and dedicated service to the INGAA Foundation collectively make me a remarkable candidate for this award. I strive to be a true leader in advancing young professionals in the pipeline industry and hope my impact will be long-lasting and global.

