



WIL Highlights for March 20, 2020

“Leadership, Partnership & Friendship: A Gift from Canada to ATL and the Southeast” featuring Nadia Theodore, Consul General of Canada for the U.S. Southeast

Special Tributes Women’s History Month:



- Dr. Theresa Tam, Canada’s Chief Public Health Official

Nadia chose to highlight Dr. Tam as a woman she greatly admires especially because of her current role which is so critical during this coronavirus pandemic.



- Dr. Betty Siegel – Former President of Kennesaw State University & namesake of the Siegel Institute for Leadership, Ethics and Character:

Susan Hitchcock chose Dr. Siegel to highlight as her SHEro. Dr. Siegel recently passed away but has left a stellar legacy in higher education, ethical leadership and so much more.

Summary: No one could have been a more effective or insightful speaker than Nadia Theodore for our first virtual WIL webinar (25 organizations represented; 50+ participants online). Poised for a “fireside chat” format and despite having only one half of the video operational, CG Theodore (Nadia) showed her amazing adaptability (her voice is beautiful too!)

As a Canadian diplomat and leader posted in Atlanta and partnering with 6 states including GA, she’s clearly busy all the time but especially during this global crisis. But even without sleeping for 24+ hours, Nadia came through loud and clear as a true leader of character – demonstrating empathy, emotional mastery, courage, humility, accountability, and other characteristics of Turknett’s Leadership Character Model.

During the discussion, Nadia shared lessons from her own career journey, her perspectives on numerous topics as well as her compelling insights on leadership, relationships, personal priorities, as well as women's advancement.

Following the fireside chat, Nadia also answered questions submitted by online participants. All in all, Nadia was 100% engaging, inspiring, and authentic / real and present with our WIL audience. We were extremely fortunate to be able to listen and learn from this incredibly wise and seasoned leader.

Background – Personal & Professional:

- Nadia grew up in Ottawa, Ontario Canada; middle child with all that implies, she said. Father (an economist) and mother (professional role as a secretary) met in the Caribbean island of St. Lucia, but they raised their “tight knit” family in Canada where both were in government services. Their roles gave Nadia insights about the career path she ultimately would follow herself.
- Her parents were positive influences as were the extended family and friends / neighbors around whom she grew up - enjoying Sunday dinners and friendly gatherings and a focus on community service.
- Her 20+ year career (check out her bio for more details) has included multiple opportunities, roles and responsibilities – including international trade negotiations; building strong partnerships with business and government leaders; developing multi-disciplinary teams; and advocating for and advancing inclusion and diversity in the workplace.

Key Insights:

- **Career Talk:** Nadia said women especially may place too much emphasis on “luck” in explaining how we got where we are. Not that luck and being at the right place at the right time don't matter, however, she believes we should use more thoughtful language. Believes the narrative we use should include more credit for ourselves – our skills, competence, and how we've prepared ourselves for the opportunities and roles that come along. Not just LUCK – BE READY! Quoting Abe Lincoln: “I will learn and get ready and someday my time will come.”
- **Priorities:** “Currently, it's COVID-19 and for the months ahead. But in general it's leadership. In particular, what energizes me is thinking about what leadership needs to look like in the future, e.g., the revolution of work with Artificial Intelligence (AI), the 5th industrial revolution (technology) etc.”
- **Relationships** – This is another area of focus for Nadia - broadly speaking. First relationship with yourself – being honest; then with teams etc. “We have to think about relationships and partnerships as ‘bigger than yourself’ and it speaks to a positive legacy for an organization or company and includes building and nurturing relationships with your employees.”

- **Diversity, Equity & Inclusion:** “100% important to us and the numbers don’t lie; drives your business, sustains success and profitability.” Canadian Prime Minister quote: “Diversity is a fact. Inclusion is a choice.” But Nadia points out that while companies and organizations are focusing on D & I often for the bottom-line, she said, “But I hope we don’t forget it’s not just about the money. And, it’s also not a new concept, e.g., countries came together after WWII (different backgrounds, ethnicities, etc) to talk versus fight, to work things for the better.”
- **Women’s Progress:** On the topic of ‘what organizations are doing well or need to improve,’ Nadia says most companies/organizations are doing fantastic in identifying individual women who have potential to move up, etc. However what needs improvement is vocal advocacy from men – not just support from behind the scenes. And there are still mindsets that need to change re women in general including women of color (like whether women are as qualified etc). “We still need to crack that nut,” Nadia said.
- **Causes She Supports:** She has a passion around leadership for young women and youth in general. Believes strongly in the power of education and not just in school. Serving as role models, mentoring and encouraging the development of the ‘soft skills.’ She often shares her job and career journey by speaking with young girls to give them an idea of what her field is like, or similar jobs. Provides them options to consider. Nadia also supports all the work that’s being done in ATL and Canada and around the world re anti-human trafficking. Thinks ATL / GA has really stepped up to the challenge through government efforts, companies like Delta and organizations like the Center for Civil and Human Rights putting the issue front and center and letting everyone know ways we can help.
- **One Thing to Remember:** Identifying one thing she’d want the audience to take away from her time with the WIL group, she said, “Be kind to yourself.” Mentioned that everyone including her has a lot on their plate right now (families to care for, workplaces / businesses closed / working at home, home schooling, social distancing, etc.) It’s definitely ok to do something nice for yourself too! Given her long hours and hectic schedule she said, “If I want French fries, I’ll have them!”

Q & A: (samples)

Q: What would she do if she wasn’t in her current career?

A: “I’d be a teacher. I’ve always enjoyed being a guest lecturer especially at the university level, but I just enjoy marrying theory with real life.”

Q: What does she do to keep up her stamina?

A: “I try to exercise on the equipment I have at home; take a walk; take time to reflect.”

Nadia’s “One Thing” Video [Click Here](#)