

2023 Women's History Month



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■ What is your role at Engle Martin?

I am an Executive Casualty General Adjuster. I joined Engle Martin in April of 2015. In February of 2022, I left for a brief time and returned in November of 2023. In April, I will celebrate my 9-year anniversary with Engle Martin.

In February of 2022, I was presented with an opportunity I never dreamed would come my way. The offer was one I could not refuse and so, I resigned my position at Engle Martin. Unfortunately, the opportunity did not pan out as expected and Engle Martin welcomed me back with open arms. While some might say I never should have left in the first place, it was a chance I had to take for myself. The return 'home' has been more wonderful than I could have imagined. It has been a great Homecoming back to my Engle Martin family.

■ Who is the most influential woman you know? How does she inspire you?

For over 23 years, I have had the immense pleasure of being personal friends with the CEO of a leading HR Advice and Legal Counsel organization. In a word she is brilliant. She has always lived by the motto of "Do what you love, and you will always love your job." She is a marketing genius and a coveted inspirational speaker and a mentor.

She has inspired me to make choices in my life and my career which benefit me and are not just what everyone wants or expects me to do. She has helped me to learn how to take a breath and stop to really evaluate decisions and choices with a clear plan in place.

■ This year, the theme of Women's History Month is "Celebrating Women Who Tell Our Stories". How does that resonate with you?

As a woman who grew up watching Barbara Walters and Oprah on TV discussing issues and telling stories which had never been done before, it really makes me stop and realize how far women have come in just my lifetime. I remember Sandra Day O'Connor being the first woman to the Supreme Court and Margaret Thatcher as Prime Minister. These strong women paved the way for women of my generation, and we must do the same for our daughters and nieces. We all need to remember 103 years ago, women could not vote and we had no women in congress. It is overwhelming when you stop and really think about it.

■ Have you faced any barriers in your career?

When I started handling claims in the field, an awfully long time ago, there were few women property adjusters. So many insureds, contractors and agents assumed I was the adjuster's assistant, and "he" would be arriving shortly. So many times, when I would call to schedule an appointment, people would say to me "so what is the adjuster's name? When will "he" be coming out?". I had to learn to deal with the frustration and stay professional and focused. I also worked on a team where the "old boy's network" was encouraged, and the women were pushed to the side. It was something I had never experienced.

Eventually, this experience motivated me to become more confident in my own abilities and surround myself with experts and contractors who respected a young woman doing, what at the time, was still considered a man's job.

■ What is the most important piece of advice you have been given?

There are two pieces of advice I follow and pass along whenever I can.

The first is "never burn a bridge". When you leave a job, make sure you leave your projects, claim files, and relationships in good order as best you can. Do not leave a mess, do not say things that would make it difficult for you to return, and be a professional. I have never left a position in my 32-year career that I could not return to if I wanted to. I am proud of the reputation I have with every company I have worked for. So, while I have only turned around and returned once, it was to Engle Martin. I am so thankful I followed such good advice.

The second was from a wonderful mentor I have been fortunate enough to work with for most of my career, and still do. He told me to be a great adjuster, you do not have to be an expert at everything. The way to be great is to ask questions and develop a team of people to work with who bring their strengths to the table. Then you can look to them when you are faced with something you do not know about or do not understand. I have developed an incredible network over the years of wonderful people I enjoy working with and who are experts in everything from fire origin and cause to forensic accounting. A colleague once said of me 'Tanya knows someone who is an expert on anything you can come up with.'

■ What is the most important message you want to send out to young women thinking about a career in the insurance industry?

Be strong, be confident, be kind, be a good listener, and do not ever be afraid to speak up for yourself.

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