

PROFILES

WOMEN IN GEOTHERMAL

Promoting the education, professional development, and advancement of women in the geothermal community.



Spotlight on Women in Geothermal USA 2025

Ann Robertson-Tait, President of GeothermEx, SLB



Ann Robertson-Tait, President of GeothermEx, has been a trailblazer in the geothermal energy sector for decades. Her journey from a geology student to a leading figure in geothermal energy is marked by her passion, perseverance, and a commitment to advancing sustainable energy solutions. This spotlight article details her career, contributions, and the insights she offers to the next generation of geothermal professionals.

Early Career and Education

Ann's fascination with geothermal energy began during her undergraduate studies in geology at Florida Atlantic University. In 1982, she found a book on geothermal energy in the university library that ignited her interest in the field. This pivotal moment led her to pursue a Fulbright Scholarship to study geothermal energy in New Zealand, where her MSc in Geology focused on ground subsidence at the world's first large-scale geothermal project at Wairakei geothermal field, which began operating in 1959. The causes and mechanisms of subsidence required her to understand the thermodynamics of high-enthalpy geothermal fields and how they evolve over time, so her studies in New Zealand deepened her understanding of geothermal systems and set the stage for the career that followed.

Joining GeothermEx

After completing her studies, Ann assessed the geothermal job market in the United States, discovering a small, privately held geothermal company with about a dozen employees: GeothermEx. Despite its size, GeothermEx was known for its innovative work and deep understanding of its geothermal resources. Ann's decision to join the company in 1985 was consistent with her desire to be a practitioner of geothermal energy. She got her wish, working on hundreds of projects over the years and contributing to the company's growth and success.

Founded in 1973, GeothermEx gradually became a globally respected consulting firm that has undertaken countless geothermal projects worldwide, including significant contributions to early geothermal developments in the United States, Latin America, Southeast Asia and the Far East. In numerous countries and geologic domains with different resource types and technical issues to be solved, GeothermEx's mission then and now is to undertake technical evaluations that enable geothermal power projects to succeed. When the first power plant was developed at Salton Sea in the early 1980s, GeothermEx analyses facilitated the first-ever non-recourse loan for a geothermal project. This was the start of GeothermEx's resource due diligence practice, which has led to the investment of nearly \$15 billion in geothermal project finance.

Personal Interests & Hobbies

Outside of her professional life, Ann is passionate about music, which has been a constant companion in her life. Jazz, rock, classical, reggae, funk, whatever – she loves it all!

She sings in a cover band and believes in the power of music as a means of communication and connection. Her love for music is a testament to her multifaceted personality and her ability to find joy and fulfillment in various aspects of life. She is an avid walker and hiker who takes advantage of California's phenomenal scenery as a counter to a busy work life, just by getting outdoors.

Technological Advancements and Industry Impact

In 1999, Ann was asked by a government contractor to lead a project to assess activities, data and technologies developed in a project funded by the US Department of Energy (DOE): Fenton Hill, one of the first Hot Dry Rock projects. Geothermal resources that don't need to rely on having high heat and good permeability in the same place? This piqued Ann's interest. Hot Dry Rock (HDR) was renamed Enhanced Geothermal Systems (EGS) and technologies beneficial to the development of both EGS and conventional geothermal resources were identified and promoted to the geothermal community. Ann took on a campaign to woo existing geothermal developers to take advantage of technologies that were common in EGS projects but not typically used in conventional projects at that time. This included using stress analyses, geomechanics, and stimulating wells to enhance their permeability. Despite much skepticism, GeothermEx consultants identified a series of non-commercial wells in conventional geothermal fields that could be stimulated to improve their productivity (the first "wells of opportunity" project). Later, Ann and her GeothermEx colleagues undertook more EGS work, including evaluations and projects in New Mexico, Alaska, Oregon and Nevada.

in 2010, GeothermEx was acquired by SLB, a technology company whose portfolio has much to offer for both conventional and non-conventional ("next-generation") geothermal. Ann became the President of GeothermEx in 2020, integrating GeothermEx's experience with SLB's extensive technology offerings and global footprint. With a focus on next-generation projects that include Advanced Geothermal Systems (AGS, a closed-loop solution) and EGS, SLB and GeothermEx are enabling geothermal energy to be developed in new ways and supplied in many more places. Our goal is to scale up geothermal energy quickly and more broadly.

Public Awareness and Collaboration

A candid and informed geothermal practitioner, Ann emphasizes the importance of public awareness and collaboration in advancing geothermal energy. She believes that raising the visibility of geothermal energy and celebrating its success stories are essential for its broader acceptance and adoption. Her involvement in various community engagement and educational initiatives to promote geothermal energy have helped demystify geothermal technologies and encourage broader support for using the abundant natural heat of the earth to provide energy that is clean, reliable and resilient.



Mentorship and Leadership

Ann is highly regarded as a mentor, particularly for women in the geothermal industry. From 2020 to 2023, she served as the global chair of Women in Geothermal (WING), advocating for gender equality and supporting the professional development of women in the sector. Regardless of gender, Ann encourages integrity, curiosity, and a broad, interdisciplinary approach to learning and problem-solving. Her mentorship has inspired many women to pursue careers in geothermal energy and has contributed to a more inclusive and diverse industry.





Advice for the Next Generation of Geothermal Experts

Ann is always willing to offer advice to young professionals to advance their geothermal journeys. She emphasizes the importance of avoiding over-specialization and developing a broad understanding of geothermal energy to get the “big picture.” She believes that flexibility, cross-training, and a willingness to learn from others are key to success in the geothermal sector. Ann encourages young professionals to ask questions, be curious, and be willing to tackle a variety of challenges. Although most of this spotlight article is brimming with positivity, Ann is a person who has learned much from her failures, and she encourages people to take chances, even when they know that they may fail.

Conclusion

Ann Robertson-Tait's career is a testament to her dedication, expertise, and passion for geothermal energy. Her contributions to the industry have been significant, and her leadership and mentorship have inspired many. As the geothermal sector continues to evolve, Ann's work serves as a beacon of innovation and progress, highlighting the potential of geothermal energy as a sustainable solution now and in the future.

Author of Spotlight on Women in Geothermal USA



Elizabeth Cambre is the North America Geothermal Business Development Manager at **Vallourec**, a global leader in steel manufacturing. Beyond her professional role, Elizabeth is deeply involved in the geothermal community. She hosts the **Geothermal Unleashed Podcast** and serves as the Mentoring Committee Chair for the **Women in Geothermal (WING) USA Chapter**, where she authors the Spotlight Articles celebrating industry leaders' achievements. Additionally, she holds the position of Rig Champion for the **Geothermal Rising TxLaOk Rig**. With over 16 years of industry experience, Elizabeth has held various leadership roles including Senior Sales Manager for Turbomachinery at **Baker Hughes** and Global Product Manager for Hydraulic Fracturing. She began her career as a hydraulic fracturing Field Engineer with **SLB**, working in Oman, Qatar, and Abu Dhabi, before relocating to Houston, Texas. Elizabeth graduated Magna cum Laude from the **University of Colorado at Boulder**, earning degrees in Chemical Engineering, Mathematics, Economics, Chinese, and International Affairs. Outside of her career, she is a devoted mother of two daughters, a fitness enthusiast, and an active member of the **Southeast Houston Toastmasters Club**, where she is working toward Distinguished Toastmaster status. Additionally, she founded **Grace & Grit Mentoring**, a free virtual global mentoring program for her daughters and their peers.