



WINLPG

Women in LPG



Milana Giles

**Operation Manager and Qualified
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“WLPGA - WOMEN IS THE LARGEST USERS OF LPG AND THEREFOR WE SHOULD ENCOURAGE MORE WOMEN NOT JUST TO BE THE USERS BUT ALSO THE DESIGNERS AND IMPLEMENTERS OF SUCH SYSTEMS AND I FEEL THAT WINLPG CAN FILL THAT ROLE TO LEAD AND SUPPORT THE FUTURE WOMEN IN LPG.”

Milana Giles

Meet the Role Models

WINLPG Role Models introduce successful individuals in the LPG industry and gives an insight into their career path, their challenges and their advice to fellow WINLPG members.

Majority of South Africans only knew and experienced LPG as a camping alternative and never as a primary or alternative energy source. Electricity was deemed to be cheap and thus no other alternatives were invested in. Fast forward 30 years, I was again introduced to LPG by reading a business plan sketched out by my husband that was focused on introducing a new gas piping product called TracPipe® into the South African gas market. After two years we found ourselves with a product finally approved for use in South Africa, but no one to install it. I had learned the terminologies from listening to his feedback from all the meetings and accompanying him on some of his appointments and presentations. I asked him if I could go on the gas course to become the registered installer of TracPipe® in South Africa. The first official gas course I attended was at one of the fire departments in Cape Town. After successfully completing the course I was hooked on gas and since then have made a career out of gas installations and, gas equipment distribution. As Operational Manager at Vapour Energy Consultants my responsibilities involve placing the international orders for the equipment we install, and then being capable of taking that equipment to site and building a gas system. So I can say that I understand the full value or delivery chain of the gas equipment industry.

What gives me satisfaction is seeing the system I have built harness the power of gas. From individual components such as piping, couplers, flanges, ball valves and regulators, then manipulating these components using welding equipment, threading machines and human (woman) hands, into a fully functional gas system used to melt metal, dry paint, heat water and cook food.

As diverse as gas is as an energy source it is equally complex in its manipulation as one requires knowledge to understand energy consumption requirements, reading architectural and engineering drawings, pressures, volume, velocity and the Standards that regulate the installation of gas systems in South Africa. These standards ensure the safety of all users of gas and therefore cannot be ignored or compromised. To give back to the industry that has given me so much, I volunteered to participate on industry working Groups which are the custodians of our industry standards which ensure the safety of all industry members and customers in South Africa.

With getting involved in gas I have been to factories in Italy, UK, America, and China, and since I work hands on with the equipment I am able to have constructive discussions with the engineering teams of our suppliers, which is extremely fulfilling for me.

Twelve years ago my installation team was comprised of my husband and myself, after a regular day in the office selling, we would go to a site and install the gas lines with only the head lights of our work vehicle to guide us. Today I work with a dedicated team of installers who look to me for guidance, support, leadership, and recognition. The same values for knowledge, attention to detail and love for the industry I try and bestow within my team. They learn from me and I learn from them as we all have different disciplines and experiences within the industry. As a woman in gas I have received fulfilment from this industry and am glad that I invested myself as a resource in this industry. Today I look at giving back to the industry and am therefore appreciative to be considered as a role model for woman in gas.

“I am a woman of action” – As a gas practitioner I make things happen from building gas systems that allow factories to operate, babies to bath and families to eat. Having the ability to take this action I am in control of my own destiny and add value to the lives of others. Energy is comfort and convenience and therefor LPG is an exceptional energy, captured by the work I do.”

-Milana Giles



SIX KEY QUESTIONS

What is your goal today?

My goal for today is to inspire women to see the vision and desires I've had for the kind of life we all want and LPG can empower us in reaching them. The potential of training and opening the opportunities to fellow women by using our individual strengths and knowledge to reach those goals and strive for a better way to do things is possible – together as Women in Gas. As a wife, mother, gas practitioner, mentor, people are surprised by what you can endure in your industry of choice. I realised that I have the power to inspire others by standing up for myself and pave the way to what was a part of my fate. I am excited about the great opportunities that have become available to me and I look forward to learning from others & sharing my knowledge with fellow Gas Practitioners across the globe and to be able to make a contribution, in particular to our future WINLPG globally.

Describe your Pathway?

I wanted to make a difference and show that a Woman can also do the physical, get your hands dirty work, in the gas industry and still be feminine. I invest in knowledge each day, whether it is specifically about gas products, installations, people and myself. I can transform from full PPE to meet the needs of my ten year old daughter by being there for her Netball practice, Eisteddfod or Swimming race. I am actively involved in my daughter's school and holds the position of Vice-Chair of the Parent Teacher Fundraising Group at school. I am already setting the example to her and her friends that they can do anything and achieve anything they set their minds to.

Did you face any specific challenges?

To put this question in perspective, let me give you an example of our first encounter with Industry members. It was at our first conference where we interacted with gas members with naive enthusiasm and honesty. Upon walking away from a current group discussion I overheard the following: "Let's make sure that we never support them"! This type of division mind set is what motivated me more to achieve in the Industry what I have thus far.

Did you have a mentor and how did this help?

Initially I did not have a mentor as the industry did not take well to a woman entering their domain. After asking many for assistance and many doors being shut in my face, I finally found John Smith from Cape Town whom was willing to mentor me. For my LPG Commercial and Industrial Courses I was privileged to work under Deon Van Vuuren, he had a plethora of information to share and I was like a sponge soaking up all the information, almost afraid that it might dry up. We worked very well together and I am very thankful for the opportunity I've had to have worked with them as my desire to succeed in the industry was great.

What does leadership mean to you?

Unquestionable integrity, honesty, diligence and patience - without it no real leadership and success is possible. In the gas industry it is even more pertinent as you don't take shortcuts or play by your own set of rules as you have the lives of people in your hands. Leadership to me is setting the example, doing it and see the enjoyment of changed lives in the faces of people you have encountered in your life. Wherever focus goes the energy flows.

What three pieces of advice would you give to someone embarking on their career with LPG?

1. Be clear in what it is you want to achieve and stay true to yourself.
2. Understand how the industry operates and set specific goals for yourself and how you would like to reach them even before you embark on this career path.
3. Aline yourself with like-minded people (mentor) in the industry to support and encourage you of which the WINLPG is a great example.



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Women in LPG Global Network

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