

Senior Executive Service Mentors
Executive Women in Motion

Name: Julie Bednar
Title: Associate Director
Agency: Department of Interior Business Center
Years in: 32 in Federal Service

Words of Wisdom: In an SES position, you can shape the culture of an organization. Through this organizational culture, you can enhance the mission of your agency, the public's experience with your agency's services and the experiences of your workforce. The opportunities are what you make them. Your impact can be as broad as establishing a new program that will last well beyond your years in service to as personal as indelible experiences for the individuals in your organization whom you mentored along your journey. I'm most proud when I see my prior mentees grow and make their own mark in civil service.

Name: Dr. Deepak Bhatnagar
Title: Director
Agency: USDA, Agricultural Research Service, Southern Regional Research Center

Name: Kelley Brookins
Title: Regional Administrator
Agency: Federal Transit Administration
Years in: 4.5

Words of Wisdom: Persistence, planning, and patience are key. Always be resilient and seek creative ways to approach issues. Be open to feedback and willing to help others. The key to success is that if you want to go fast go alone but if you want to go far go together. What is meant for you will never miss you and what misses you was never meant for you.

Name: Annie Collins
Title: Associate Administrator for Enforcement
Agency: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
Years in: 13

Words of Wisdom: Volunteer, build your network, tell stories/build trust, be vulnerable, manage change, think way ahead and plan ahead, have the crisis now, be grateful and kind. Make your team happy. Have confidence! Don't self-eliminate, go for it!

Name: Mary De Anda-Ybarra
Title: Field Office Director
Agency: DHS/Immigration and Customs Enforcement/Enforcement and Removal Operations
Years in: 1
Words of Wisdom: Stay positive and let go of things you can't control. Protect your time.

Name: COL James Durant III
Title: Chief Counsel
Agency: Department of Energy - Office of Science – Chicago
Words of Wisdom: *Learn your unit, your people and your supervisor first
Bottom line up front in all your communications
Don't be afraid to fail, but when you do fail, work the recovery plan just ASAP
and that is what supervisors want to hear and see occur.
Don't lie, steal or cheat.*

Name: Tonya Freeman
Title: Deputy Regional Administrator
Agency: Social Security Administration
Years in: 3
Words of Wisdom: Explore opportunities outside your comfort zone. Success requires hard work and continuous learning.

Name: Daniel Frye
Title: Bemidji Area Director
Agency: Indian Health Service
Years in: 3
Words of Wisdom: Every path is different, don't let someone tell you how you're supposed to reach your destination; some may take the beaten path, some may blaze a trail. Decide your path and commit to it.

Name: Dr. K. David Huth
Title: Executive Director, Fort Snelling National Cemetery Complex
Agency: National Cemetery Administration
Years in: 1.5
Words of Wisdom: (Think Read Think Plan Execute Assess Repeat)
Think x Read

Name: Rayford Irvin
Title: Houston District Director
Agency: Equal Employment Opportunity Commission
Years in: 25

Words of Wisdom: When you are a leader, don't simmer in your successes, your successes are expected and your growth comes from your failures and how you handle them. You should know your value and how you are valued by your leader and the agency/organization where you work and ensure you get a sponsor in the organization. Listen to the feedback and be aware of your blind spots- blind spots will kill you. In my leadership journey, a sponsor once shared with me, "As a leader, if your presence doesn't make an impact, then your absence won't make a difference."

Name: Rose Kendrick
Title: Deputy Center Director
Agency: U.S. Citizenship & Immigration Service- National Benefits Center
Years in: 2.5

Words of Wisdom: What you do in public service makes a difference; own it.

Name: Molly Kocialski
Title: Regional Administrator
Agency: U.S. Patent and Trade Office
Years in:
Words of Wisdom:

Name: Tammie Poitra
Title: Regional Director
Agency: Bureau of Indian Affairs
Years in: 5

Words of Wisdom: Serving as a Senior Executive although challenging with respect to the complexity of issues that I deal with on a daily basis, is also gratifying and keeps me humble. Seeking a well-established team and learning to empower the team is critical when making decisions and problem solving. I also do volunteer work/projects with the Executive Resource Division, which I feel is not only an obligation to the DOI organization but a duty to pass on my knowledge and experience to our upcoming leaders.

Name: Joseph Prusacki
Title: Director, National Operations Division
Agency: USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service
Years in: 15

Words of Wisdom: Take advantage of all opportunities. Do not wait for them, create them. Perform your job well, be an outstanding coworker.

Name: Martin Robinson
Title: Federal Security Director State of Minnesota
Agency: Transportaion Securiry Agency
Years in: 2

Words of Wisdom: You need to take ownership of your career. Decide where you want to advance to, put in the effort, and get into a mentorship program. Look for senior officials that you admire and engage with them on your future. Be aware, and prepared, that you may need to make a geographical move and/or a different agency move to advance

Name: Mary Ruwwe
Title: Regional Commissioner, Federal Acquisition Service, Heartland Region
Agency: General Services Administration
Years in: 18

Words of Wisdom: As you embark upon your career, you'll find there may or may not be opportunities that lie ahead, don't wait, create them. Your career isn't what happens, it's what you make of it.

Based on my own experience, success is dependent on the choices you make and being open to new thinking. I also encourage you to take personal responsibility to establish your goals to challenge yourself and views challenges as an opportunity to make a difference.

Learn as much as you can about your organization and it's people across the enterprise to understand how what you do impacts others and vice versa. Your network is invaluable. Last but not least, give your best everyday, treat others as you want to be treated, make the job you're in yours and have fun!

Name: Joseph Schmitt
Title: Executive Director
Agency: VA Office of Finance, Debt Management, US Department of Veterans Affairs
Years in: 5

Words of Wisdom: Preparing the leaders of tomorrow is the most important undertaking an employee at any level can do in support of creating a better tomorrow for our nation and the Federal workforce. We must develop, invest in, equip, educate, broaden, and support our emerging leaders so they can confidently/successfully address the increasing complexities facing our nation. Challenges are certain, failures are likely, learning from both are foundational to our future success. Demonstrate the grace and poise of resiliency and know that people don't care how much you know, until they know how much you care (T. Roosevelt). The next highest level of excellence begins with you.

Name: Dana Skelley
Title: Air and Radiation Division Director
Agency: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 7
Years in: 2.5

Words of Wisdom: Utilize a great supervisor or mentor; Try new things, develop new skills; Utilize a coach to explore goals and career desires; Utilize existing leadership programs and training.

Name: Mayela Sosa
Title: Director of Field Services, Mid-America
Agency: Federal Highway Administration
Years in: 27

Words of Wisdom:

- Lead by example.
 - Take care of people and they will take care of you.
 - Be part of the solution.
 - Delegate appropriately and responsibly.
 - Keep things in perspective.
 - Find balance and joy (i.e. self-care).
 - Communicate early and often (includes listening)
 - Maintain situational awareness.
 - Pay it forward.
-

Name: Kristi Zook Ciolli
Title: Warden
Agency: Department of Prisons, Federal Transfer Center,
Years in: 1

Words of Wisdom: *“Be so good they can’t ignore you.”* – Steve Martin