



ACSSQUARTERLY

Q2 2018



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- Arlene Espinoza

A candid interview with Arlene Espinoza, ACSS Past President and Captain of the Ship. Read more about how she was determined to help increase visibility for ACSS during her 28-years of membership.

Arlene passionately believes in mentoring others and it comes naturally to her. As a supervisor and manager, she always encouraged and helped her staff prepare for promoting. She would give them tasks to help them develop their skills so that when they wanted to promote, they were prepared. "When I see them promote, it gives me an incredible amount of happiness and pride," said Arlene.

YEARS OF SERVICE

Arlene (Shriner) Espinoza worked for the California Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) for her entire career and recently retired in December of 2017. In 1981, she started her career with the DMV in Santa Rosa when she was 20 years old and was hired on as a Program Technician Trainee (PTT). Over the years, she moved up through the system and went from PTI to PTII and then moved on to a Control Cashier for a DMV field office. Eight years later, she promoted to her first supervisory position - a Supervising Motor Vehicle Representative (SMVR). Because of her promotion, she first began her membership with ACSS. Throughout the years, she continued promoting through the DMV Manager series. She went from a Manager I to II to III and at the time of retirement, was at the top of the scale as a Manager IV (similar to a SSM2). Altogether, Arlene served 36 years at the DMV and 28 of those years as an ACSS member.



Arlene accepts a gift of gratitude after stepping down from 6 years as ACSS President in 2015.

CHALLENGES ON THE JOB

Working at the DMV, the challenges changed with the environments. In the field office environment, she was challenged by dealing with staff issues and diffusing the public when they were dissatisfied. "We were a public forward-facing agency and if the customers were angry, it was my job to diffuse it," said Arlene.

As a manager, Arlene worked at the DMV headquarters in a very specialized unit where she oversaw pre-production testing to help identify defects in the system according to business rules and legislation. Her team was responsible for identifying defects, testing the implementation fixes, responding to operational questions and providing instruction. The challenge here was not only getting the support and teamwork of both the IT department and the field offices, but for both offices to recognize that this task was important. Arlene bridged the gap between these departments and helped them work together to create a functioning and useful product. "I felt very rewarded that the work my team was doing was important, crucial and respected."

STEPPING UP

Arlene became a supervisor and a member of ACSS one year before ACSS was officially incorporated and about the time of the

creation of the Excluded Employee Bill of Rights in 1990, however she didn't become actively involved in ACSS until later. She recalls being unexpectedly thrown into the spotlight when the position of Chapter 507's President became suddenly vacant. The other officers of Chapter 507 approached Arlene and asked if she would volunteer to be their Chapter President. The officers offered to provide assistance and guidance during the process to help familiarize her with the position. Arlene accepted the position. She laughs and says, "That's when they got me! I took a leap of faith and was elected."

DO YOUR JOB

Arlene considers herself fortunate for never having needed the representational services of ACSS throughout her career. However, she always recognized the fact that the work environment could change within a moment's notice. Arlene reminisces, "In my last position in the field office, I was the administrative manager. I didn't see eye-to-eye with the office manager at the time. If there ever were a time where I thought that I might need ACSS representation, it would have been then. However, I just did my job because I knew I had responsibilities. I was fortunate that I never had issues that threatened my career." Had Arlene needed any assistance in this issue, or any other difficult job-related issues, ACSS would have been there to help guide her on how to handle it. Arlene always knew she had ACSS to back her up if the need arose.

VISIBILITY AND OUTREACH

By having a leadership role in ACSS, Arlene has always felt the need to network, mentor others and spread the word about ACSS. It has always been part of her goals and her focus. "I always felt the need for greater visibility for ACSS," said Arlene. Greater visibility was important because in the early years when she went to the Capitol for Lobby Day and met with Legislators, no one knew who ACSS was. Not even the Governor of California knew about ACSS or what ACSS was advocating for. After so many times getting mistaken for other organizations or met with blank stares, Arlene was fed up. She was determined in her leadership role with ACSS to make the organization more visible and recognizable.

In her 28-year tenure with ACSS, Arlene worked her way through leadership roles. She held positions as President of Chapter 507, Chapter 503 Board Member, Vice President of Membership Development and President of ACSS. Within those years, she saw membership numbers in ACSS fluctuate. At one point in the early 2000's, membership began to decline. She attributes that decline to ACSS not meeting the needs of its members. "We were doing the same old things without meeting the needs of our membership," she recollects. To better serve the needs of the members of ACSS, she worked with the delegates of the tri-annual Delegate Assembly to create a Strategic Plan for ACSS. She listened carefully to what the members had to say and acknowledged their needs. She helped hire qualified staff members at ACSS who dissected and audited each facet of the association. The audit process began by simply asking members:

- What was ACSS doing?
- Where was ACSS succeeding?
- Where was ACSS failing?
- How could ACSS change to meet the needs of the membership?

"How do we steer this ship?" Arlene plainly asked the ACSS staff. And she admits that was the turning point of the association. She goes on to say, "Realizing that the member's needs were not being met made us change the way we were doing things. In order to succeed, things had to be different. It took a lot of time to achieve. It was like using a little oar to steer a tanker and sometimes I felt like I was drowning. But perseverance is definitely one of the key elements to staying afloat. We had a core team of staff that rocked and we really worked well together. We were a cohesive team."

From that auditing process, Arlene had a vision to create the Member Outreach Program with her ACSS team. The success of the Member Outreach Program brought ACSS into the spotlight in the workplace and increased visibility to the membership. "It was important for me to see that program grow. And it grew tremendously! I am so very thankful that we no longer get those blank stares and 'Who are you?' comments from Legislators anymore. Now, we actually get directors of departments to work collaboratively with us to

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.....

help meet goals." One of the pinnacles that marked success of the Outreach Program happened in January 2014 when Arlene and the ACSS Executive Board Members were invited to have dinner with Governor Jerry Brown in the Governor's Mansion. In the years that Arlene was involved, ACSS became a recognizable powerhouse in the Capitol when it came to advocating for the rights of Excluded State Employees."

KICKING BUTT AND TAKING NAMES

From the bottom of her heart, Arlene cares about the members of ACSS. "We treat our members with respect," Arlene says with gusto. She continues to describe how other supervisory membership organizations only care about their networking social gatherings and are not really focused on advocating or legislation on behalf of their members to make their members lives better. "I want our members to know that ACSS advocates, and we advocate strongly. We are kicking butt and taking names. We have a highly-skilled, highly-functional staff that takes care of the needs of our members. The ACSS Labor Relations Representatives staff helps prevent catastrophes from happening to members. Many times they take care of workplace issues before they even happen by collaborating with CalHR on improving policies. Those are the kind of behind-the-scenes acts that we do for our members. None of the other supervisory organizations out there are at this level."

FOND MEMORIES

As Arlene heads into retirement, she reminisces about the many fond memories while a member of ACSS. "I'm going to miss the people, the camaraderie, and the wonderful things that ACSS is doing," she says. One of the most remarkable things that happened during her membership with ACSS was meeting her husband, Louie Espinoza. Louie was

also very involved with ACSS leadership and held several positions during his years as an ACSS member. Arlene and Louie met when Arlene was Chapter 507 President in San Jose and Louis was Chapter 511 President in Los Angeles. They got to know each other at ACSS Board Meetings and soon became friends. They met again at another ACSS Board Meeting in April of 2001.



Arlene and Louie Espinoza on their wedding day in November 2002.

"I'm working in Sacramento now," Arlene said to Louie. "I'm working in Sacramento now, too!" replied Louie. "We will have to go out to dinner and go explore Sacramento together!" said Arlene.

By June of that year, they were dating. And in November of 2002, they exchanged wedding vows in front of 100 family members and friends, many of them ACSS colleagues.

She also gives a huge shout out to the ACSS Executive Board officers that have been her colleagues, teammates and close friends for the past several years. "I couldn't have done it without them," she remarks. Each one of them has been an integral part in ACSS' success and Arlene was honored to work with them. She also commends the political fire and passion of current ACSS President Frank Ruffino. Arlene says, "Frank truly steered us towards a path of success in our political outreach program. He is a political animal and no one can stifle his energy. ACSS is in good hands with Frank Ruffino as President."

A PLACE IN HER HEART

Arlene says that ACSS and its members will always have a special place in her heart. After she retires she will continue to follow ACSS and subscribe to the weekly e-blast to see what ACSS is accomplishing. Arlene is now an active member with the California State Retirees and plans to continue to advocate on behalf of retirees to help protect their pensions and health benefits. Besides her relentless quest for advocacy, Arlene also plans to take a break in her retirement and do some travelling. She and Louis have trips to Hawaii and Europe in the works for this upcoming year.

"You need to be a member. You need to be part of this organization that helps protect your career; helps protect your future going into retirement, and helps support you when you are confronted with issues that you don't anticipate or expect. You need ACSS and what it provides for you. But you also need to be involved. You have a say in your life and in your career."

"People tell me that I have done an amazing job and I say thank you. But I don't feel like I have done anything special. I feel like I did what I needed to do. If I was the right person for the job, then I am glad. I am glad that I could be a catalyst for change. And now I am in the cheering section. Truly and honestly, ACSS will always be a part of my life" 🌸


In this issue:

- **MEMBER SPOTLIGHT:
ARLENE ESPINOZA**
- **UPCOMING
ACSS ELECTIONS
INFORMATION**
- **FIND YOUR NEXT
CHAPTER MEETING**

**Q2
2018**

First Name Last Name

Address 1

Address 2

City, State ZIP

ACSS ELECTIONS

ACSS elections are just around the corner. As a member of ACSS, you will receive instructions on how to vote for your local Chapter officers and delegates. This year, ballots will be handled by an online system instead of paper ballots.

Please make sure your home address and personal email address are current in our system.

To update your address online, visit
www.ACSS.org/contact/update-your-info.

Or, call ACSS at (916) 326-4257.

- **April 20** - Elections are open. Vote online!
- **May 21** - Elections close at 5pm
- **June 1** - Election results publicly announced
- **July 13 - 15** - ACSS Delegate Assembly

For more info about Chapter Elections, visit
www.ACSS.org/Events/ACSSElections.



GET INVOLVED!

Come to your local ACSS Chapter's next meeting:

509 - April 10 (Bakersfield)

507 - May 15 (TBD)

511 - May 17 (Los Angeles)

508 - May 24 (Stockton)

512 - May 24 (TBD)

502/503 - May 30 (Sacramento)

514 - May 31 (TBD)

504 - June 5 (TBD)

505 - June 7 (Oakland)

513 - June 8 (San Diego)

For more info, visit www.ACSS.org/Events

Contact ACSS Headquarters:
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