



2022 CREW Network Convention Scholarship Recipient Testimonial

First of all, I want to show appreciation to CREW Calgary and my fellow board directors for awarding me the 2022 scholarship to attend CREW Convention in Chicago. This was my first in person convention since 2019, and the vibe was nothing short of exciting – to be gathered together again - there was an overall air of gratitude, just to be back together with 1300 women in CRE.

Thursday's session on The Global Economic Outlook was captivating! Marci Rossell was so eloquent as she took the stage (without any presentation material, I might add), to educate us on the history of recessions in North America, the rise and fall of inflation rates, the impact of crisis on our economies, and what we can look forward to in the next 18 months. She took what some might deem a mundane topic, and made it so engaging, I even walked away feeling like an expert!

The afternoon sessions included small group discussions on Multifamily Design, Peer to Peer Exchanges, and learning excursions around the city. Chicago's architecture always blows me away.

Friday morning kicked off with a powerful display and acknowledgment of women in the leadership certificate program, including CREW Calgary's own Kate Briscoe. Each lady took the stage and spoke of her experience in the program, the learning opportunity, the support, and the encouragement. It was a true example of the benefits of being part of CREW.

We then proceeded into the Distinguished Leaders Roundtable session. Three successful ladies shared their experiences, successes, and failures throughout their careers. They shared words of wisdom around seeking wisdom, on when to let go, and on how to address conflict head on. Listening to these women made me feel so understood, that I was not alone in my struggles and that brought a certain feeling of support and comfort.

Friday afternoon was probably my favorite portion of the convention. A member of CREW who had recently passed away with cancer was recognized for her contributions and we were told a little about her life. It was a very emotional moment, as this ladies' sister accepted an award on her behalf. 1,300 hundred women stood in applause and acknowledgment. At that moment all I could think was "where else would 1,300 people stand and honor someone they really didn't know?" I blinked back my tears and felt pretty lucky to be standing with these people. We are all human, aren't we? All connected by the lives we live, the losses we bear and the joys we share.

Our 2023 President was announced, and she was so open, so vulnerable, about real-life things – divorce, motherhood, loss, career changes – but with support of some key people in her life who encouraged her to join CREW, she was able to push forward and become successful as a lawyer, and now as CREW Network President. I appreciate people with real life stories like hers. I felt encouraged.

Lisa Ling then ended our convention with an impactful conversation about her career journey, about empathy and about the importance of diversity and exposure to what is happening in the world around us.

In summary, CREW Convention had a resounding message of "you belong here", and I think we all walked away feeling as such. It gave us hope for future successes and reminded us that to be part of this organization is belonging to a "crew" that encourages each other, uplifts each other and understands each other.

I am grateful for the opportunity to attend CREW Convention 2022. I have been a CREW member, committee volunteer and board director for 11 years now, and I wholeheartedly say, it gives back to me as much (or more) than I give to it. I am happy I belong to a "crew".

- Carla Barney