

Kim Romo-McGraw

Tradeswomen Heroes Award
Winner - April 2024



Level of Experience: Apprentice

Years in Trade: 4 years

Union: LIUNA

Local: 238

City: Spokane, WA

Bio

My name is Kym Romo-McGraw, a descendant of First Nations Tribal families (Matawa-Cree) who once resided in both Canada and the United States. Our families' ancestors were known as Medicine people and followed the cultural teachings passed down for generations. My family and I lived in Republic, an Eastern Washington rural community that afforded me the opportunity to have a chance to experience homeschooling until my early teen years when I attended Curlew High School. Initially, I had considered and was accepted to enter an Aeronautical program, yet once I discovered the amount of time it required to "drive a desk" my interests took me in a different direction.

Wanting to expand my education and experience the benefit of social and community engagement I enrolled in the Curlew Job Corps Program; working outdoors and in different settings was a perfect fit for me. After enrolling in the Job Corps, I soon discovered some uncomfortable truths about "Women in the Trades". Having lived as a female in a rural setting I wasn't exposed to some of the barriers that others in the inner-city settings do earlier in life. I had the benefit of working alongside "the boys" and neither they nor I knew any different. Once



there in the Curlew Job Corps Center, the work was increasingly difficult; that's when a real mentor made an impactful effect on my life.

Brother Luis Licea, an instructor, saw something in me that must have driven him to challenge me, he showed me ways to do the work to pace myself so as not to "destroy my body" physically. He also introduced me to other trade opportunities that allowed me to expand my education and employment opportunities for my future benefit. It was Job Corps and my mentor who introduced me to the Laborers Union (LIUNA Local #238 to be exact).

Becoming an Apprentice Laborer has had its challenges, yet looking back at my life, my history, and my family's journey, I was up for the challenge. It has been through this new direction and exposure to my new LIUNA Family that I found the joy of being a role model and a mentor to other "Women Building Nations".

Since that time, I met and have married a U.S. Army Soldier, we are living the American dream both serving this Nation, while he defends its freedoms, I get to build them for generations to come.

Why Kim Was Nominated

Mrs. McGraw has shown what it takes to become a leader since I first met her 15 years ago in Jobcorps and continues to impress me and our signatory contractors. She has a bright future ahead.