

2026 ASCE Utah LANDMARK ENGINEER



ETHLYN ANN HANSEN

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“Ann was the first woman to graduate from the University of Utah's civil engineering program in 1951. She went on to earn a master's degree from the Institute of Transportation and Traffic Engineering at UC Berkeley and spent a lifetime in transportation and highway design. Though most of her professional work was in California, she is a vital part of state history as the University of Utah's first female civil engineer.

At the University of Utah she noted a range of reception, with some of the students and professors encouraging and accepting while others were indifferent or openly hostile. She was featured in a Salt Lake Tribune article in 1948 for breaking the mold of the typical student and fended off questions about taking these courses with the secret intent of spending time with the boys to find a husband. Nevertheless, she continued the program and found a friend in the head of the Civil Engineering Department Professor Adelbert Diefendorf, who she says “believed that there was a place for women students in the department.” At the U of U she served as Secretary of the ASCE student chapter. After her time in Utah, she moved to California. She completed her masters and began work in the transportation sector. Her career progression was slow at first, but as the amount of women in the industry increased she found strategic opportunities to advance. Ann became a member of 8 professional societies including service as the ITE District 6 President. Her contribution to regional engineering societies is well-documented and expansive...

The University of Utah distinguished Ann with the Emeritus Alumni Merit of Honor Award in 2003... Ann has demonstrated the personal strength, engineering acumen, and community investment that our Section holds paramount.”