



Nichelle McLemore on the future of energy, inclusion and her passion for helping clients

Deloitte is proud to introduce the next profile in our series of women in the energy industry. By highlighting the stories of women in energy, we hope to help facilitate meaningful conversations, create connections, and showcase the myriad of opportunities available to enter and thrive in the energy industry.



Everyone in Houston is a little bit oily, Nichelle McLemore likes to say, which is why it's not a big surprise that the Houston native ended up in the industry. We chatted with the Managing Director of Deloitte's Oil, Gas and Chemicals practice about her journey in a powerful, changing industry, why women need to be more a part of the conversation, and how she gets a big rush from a good meeting.

Nichelle McLemore
Managing Director, Oil, Gas & Chemicals
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A shift to (clean) energy

McLemore has been with Deloitte for over 16 years—but not all her time has been spent in the energy sector. She started in consulting, working in M&A, where she was industry agnostic. She enjoyed the client work, but after the birth of her daughter, realized she had to make a change. “I left when my daughter was born with special needs,” she says. “With less flexibility and predictability in my working hours, M&A became incompatible.” She worked as a chief of staff for a while, until one of her mentors presented her with a customer relationship management (CRM) opportunity. Since she lives in Houston, that meant she would be focused on energy clients. “I had a bit of context for the industry just from growing up,” she says. “And, you know, I’m a little bit oily anyway.”

A changing industry

“But there’s more to McLemore’s affinity for the industry than her Houston upbringing. “It’s such an exciting time to be in the industry,” she says. “When you think about the transition to clean energy and environmental justice issues that come along with it, there are a lot of brilliant minds thinking through it.” McLemore notes that many of those brilliant minds belong to women—and that no one should be left out of solving these problems. This is especially true of issues surrounding using green energy in ways that are not cost-prohibitive. “The industry has a ways to go when it comes to diversity,” she says, referencing the challenge attracting millennials, women and minorities. McLemore stipulates that it needs to be looked at in a new light, not one just focusing on traditional energy sources, but more toward the future and where we’re going with energy transitions.

“Why would you ever try to solve one of the biggest problems in the world with the smallest group of people? You need everybody.”

Client relationships keep her going

McLemore loves a good conversation, especially with her clients. “I know it might sound corny, but I get a rush from a good client meeting.” In fact, one particular meeting has been one of her biggest career highlights so far. “I was in Japan, facilitating a meeting for German-owned company with a translator,” she says. “I remember thinking, ‘this is huge.’ There is no greater example of bringing people together than what I am doing now.” Despite loving interaction with clients, most of the time McLemore is the only woman, and only Black woman, in the room.

“I think I have a thicker skin. There are things you hear, things that are said in passing, things that you think, “Well, I would never say that.”

Keep an eye on what you’re here for

“Some days being a woman in a male-dominated industry are harder than others,” she says. “But the most important thing is that I am here to prove the case for Deloitte. I am here for a reason. Let’s just do this.”

McLemore knows that part of the reason she can have this attitude is owed to her mentors—or her board of directors—as she likes to call them. “In this space I can ask ‘dumb’ questions and let them know what my real aspirations are,” she explains. “What makes it a safe place is that I believe they’re going to give me honest feedback that serves me and not them.” Another area McLemore finds support is through WEN. “Representation is so important,” she says. “With WEN, I can see other people in the same boat I am in.” She likes the ability to network with other women in energy and to see leaders who are women in the industry. It’s another safe space where she can ask questions and continue to learn.

Future of the industry and women in it

“While it’s still predominately a male industry, that’s changing,” McLemore says. For women to continue to make an impact, she thinks they should lean into the change and continue to raise their hands for new opportunities. “I can’t promise you won’t be turned down,” she says. “But we have to go for it.” And allies and sponsors must stand up and help create pathways as well. When will McLemore know there are enough women in the industry? “When everyone thinks, ‘oh we don’t need to do a women’s event, we already did an event, we’re covered.’” Until then, women will continue to need safe spaces, like WEN, to come together—and they will need to continue advocating for themselves.

Nichelle McLemore: The lightning round

Women in Energy

Describing herself in three words: Witty, authentic, personable

Favorite food or drink: Fajitas and margaritas

Favorite place to travel: The beach

One thing on her bucket list: To go to all the Grand Slam tennis tournaments in one year

How she's practiced self-care amid the pandemic: Listening to music and exercise, sometimes together

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