

My name is Sigrid McLean and I have been working at the Durkee plant for just over a year and a half. My testimony is a little different than most you will be reading; I come from a slightly different perspective.

I graduated from Montana Tech with an engineering degree in May of 2017 and quickly packed my bags to start the first week of June in Durkee. Preparing to go into the workforce as a young, female engineer I was extremely nervous. I moved away from all my friends and family in Montana and to put quite simply, I was terrified. When I graduated with an engineering degree, I was well aware all I received was a piece of paper that was just a “ticket” into the workforce, much how a ticket is needed to board a plane. I knew I had only touched the tip of the iceberg through college. The first month of work I contemplated quitting because I did not believe I was cut out to be an engineer, not smart or tough enough to work in a cement plant. I was overwhelmed with all the things I had to learn.

One thing I did learn quickly though, is that these people take pride in their work. They will always do the job 100%; they strive to be their best. They encourage others to do the same. They push me to do more and more, but still supporting me along the way. They instill more confidence in myself and my abilities, as I quite often lack. When I ask questions, they are excited to answer. When I ask for help, they are excited help. All the success I have had thus far is because of the Durkee workforce. No matter what happens with my career, I will be forever grateful for their guidance and love throughout my journey.

I get asked quite frequently, “How does a 24 year old girl work in a male dominated field? You must be so smart. Show those guys who’s boss” I always respond quite harshly back, as this statement saddens me when I think of how kind hearted these men are. My answer is the same. “I work with the best guys out there. I know they care for me because they push me and they are always there to settle my anxiety and fears. I feel so respected and loved. They want to see women succeed.”

The Durkee family welcomed me warmly into their environment. They cared more deeply for me than previous experience working various internships through my college degree. They care about my activities after work, my likes, my dislikes, my family, etc. The list continues. Within a few months, I quickly began to refer to my work friends as “my Durkee fam”. I genuinely look forward to going to work, mainly so I can catch up with my family. Yes, some moan and groan at each other from time to time, but I believe that is just another symptom of a tight-knit family.

I believe it takes a special group of people to create this environment. It’s work environments that these people create that will help me be successful in my career. They are *the* prime example for supporting a young female engineer entering the workforce. I could argue from an environmental stand point with this testimony, but what life really comes down to is people. Yes, what brought us here is money, but what keeps us here is the people. The Durkee fam makes life taste so sweet and a harsh world, and I will be heartbroken if that is stripped away.