

CELEBRATE PURDUE WOMEN

# LYNN SCHREYER



## DISTINGUISHED PURDUE ALUMNI SCHOLARS AWARD ACCEPTANCE REMARKS

I find myself reflecting on some of the key decisions that I've made that led me to where I am today professionally. For example, while in high school trying to decide which degree to pursue, I was told I was good at math, so I should major in engineering. I decided to pursue mechanical engineering. While getting a masters in mechanical engineering, I was frustrated about not understanding why a computational algorithm actually solved the model for my project, and at the same time, my Math for Engineers' professor said I asked really good questions, and wondered why was I not in in mathematics. So I left engineering and came to Purdue to pursue a mathematics degree. I studied hard to pass the qualifying exams and I thankfully only later learned that I was the third American in five years to pass them. I started studying pure math, but when it took me longer than two days to solve a problem, I thought to myself, "Why does anyone care about this problem?" and so I switched to applied mathematics. Looking back at my decisions, I note about half were internally and half were externally motivated. I wonder if I would have gotten here if I hadn't had those around me who suggested a path to take. One intentional choice I have almost always made is to never turn down an opportunity that pushed me out of my comfort zone. I've never regretted stepping out of my comfort zone. I want to thank Purdue - without this institution and the faculty and students (and most importantly, their great ideas!), I wouldn't be here.

Lynn received her PhD in Applied Mathematics from Purdue in 1994 and then had a post doc in the Agronomy department at Purdue with Dr. Cushman. She was a faculty member in the Department of Mathematical and Statistical Sciences at the University of Colorado Denver for 19 years before becoming Professor in the Mathematics and Statistics Department at Washington State University. Lynn has been President of the Society of Industrial and Applied Mathematics Activity Group on Geosciences, and worked on modeling a wide variety of problems including smart materials, movement of contaminants in groundwater, drug delivery, cheese, and refugee movement.