

Adrien Butler, P.E. Project Civil Engineer



Adrien was born in Michigan to a working-class family. Her father worked in the steel industry in Michigan until an industry downturn led them to Colorado Springs, Colorado when she was just 1 year old. Once in Colorado, her mom worked in Human Resources and her dad became a plumber. She enjoyed growing up in a diverse neighborhood where kids rode their bikes everywhere and an abandoned subdivision was the local “playground”.

Adrien had many interests as a child. She was in Girl Scouts from second grade through her senior year of high school. This was an important way to give back to her community by helping others and she valued being part of something with a purpose. In middle school she was the tallest kid around, so the basketball coach told her to stand under the basket, catch the ball and shoot. Eventually the other kids caught up and she chose to focus on her love of music



instead. She played the tenor saxophone for years and throughout high school she was in the pep band, jazz band, concert band, and marching band! Her favorite time of year was the annual family camping trip to Salida, Colorado. She has many fond memories of spending time with grandparents on this trip. It is still an annual tradition and now her two sons are sharing similar experiences with their grandparents.

Throughout her childhood, the family worked on many home improvement projects together. When her father plumbed their house, there were no other boys in the family so Adrien and her sister had to help. The truth is, she enjoyed those projects and thus

began her love for building and construction. In fact, she became a plumber’s apprentice the summer after high school.

...
“I really enjoyed giving back to the community, helping others and being part of something bigger than my own little universe. I also forged some life-long relationships”
 ...

Her interest in construction combined with her strong math and science skills led her to Colorado School of Mines (CSM) where she pursued her degree in Civil Engineering. CSM was a small school that was close to home but far enough away to have some freedom. She quickly learned a lesson about the rigor of the university when she scored a 46% on her first chemistry test. “I didn’t have to work much in high school but I definitely worked very hard in college”.

In addition to her coursework, she was a member and officer of Circle K International, a Kiwanis-Family Club for college students focused on developing leadership skills and serving the communities in which they live. After graduation she was a member of the Golden Kiwanis Club for several years, which included a 1-year term as president. She remains good friends with several people she met during that time.



Adrien found her time at CSM to be fulfilling and enlightening. As a participant in the McBride Honors Program she took honors classes in place of liberal arts classes and graduated with a minor in public affairs. The pinnacle of the program was her junior year special interest project.



Adrien spent a month in Chile where she visited Escondida and Chuquicamata mines. The experience piqued her interest in mining as she witnessed the significance of mining in the Chilean economy and was able to compare a government owned mine to a publicly owned mine.

Her time in Chile also fed her appetite for travel and for experiencing the diversity of the world. Having grown up in a diverse neighborhood she appreciates learning about different cultures, their history, and mostly the food. As a mother of two small children she doesn't find much time for hobbies anymore but she does get to test her creativity in the kitchen as



she makes different fare from around the world. Although she can follow a recipe she prefers to improvise and see where it goes. Her greatest love in the kitchen is baking...desserts specifically. If you have the chance to dine with her, perhaps she will make her favorite...Julia Child's Boca Negra Cake; named as such because the rich chocolate is said to turn your mouth black.

Adrien found her opportunity to break into the mining industry in 2004 at a Society of Women Engineers event at CSM where she met Pete Kowalewski, co-founder of Tierra Group. She

was recruited to work as a Staff Engineer and has been working with a core group of engineers through multiple company transitions. In her first week on the job, Adrien started working on a project for Barrick Gold Corporation. She remembers being told "this is the type of project you might work on for your whole career". Now, as a Project Engineer with Tierra Group, she spends the majority of her time working on that same Barrick project, as well as new ones, and even spent a couple of years living in Elko, Nevada to provide support to the Barrick Goldstrike Mine.

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"I remember being told to keep my feet up in the ATV because the crocodiles might nip at my them while we were driving. I couldn't fathom such a thing, but I have never forgotten it."
...

One of the most memorable moments of her career was visiting Mt. Todd in the Northern Territory of Australia. It was the first project she managed and she welcomed the chance to visit the site. She was intrigued by the water problems facing the site. The mine was in closure and water had been pumped to various locations throughout the project's lifetime which resulted in pH problems in the Tailings Storage Facility (TSF). It was the first time she had seen decant towers in the middle of the TSF and it was certainly the first time, and the last, she encountered crocodiles on a mine site.

At this stage in her career, Adrien isn't certain what the future has in store for her. With two young children she is currently learning how to balance work with the



demands of motherhood. When they are able to find a babysitter, she and her husband, Kelly, enjoy going to concerts – some of their past favorites include Stone Temple Pilots, Walk the Moon, The Who, and Bob Seger. She appreciates the opportunities to go camping, visit family, and maximize their zoo membership. She has never lost her zeal for home improvement projects either; although now she works on her own home in addition to her parents. At some point, Adrien would also like to give back to the community again through a professional organization like Society of Women Engineers which advocates for women in the fields of engineering and technology; a topic near and dear to her heart.

