

**In the
Final
Analysis**

**“The Greatest American that America
Won’t Recognize!”**

— *Headline for Amazon Customer Review of
Ellen Swallow: The Woman Who Founded Ecology*

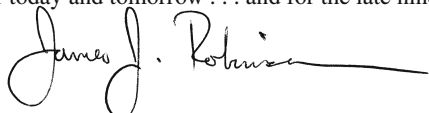
I am grateful for many, many things . . . too many to list here or in an entire volume of editorials. Near the top of the list, however, is the fact that I was raised to embrace the idea that all people should be treated equally, regardless of race, gender, religion, ethnicity, intelligence, social status, or any other deprecatively applied designation. Not everyone that I’ve encountered has shared that view, but it was the unchallenged belief in my single-parent home where my mother, a remarkable woman, made sure that I was cared for (by other remarkable women) while she worked hard in graduate school and as a nurse.

Some might say, “That’s a warm enough story, Jim, but why bring up diversity today? Haven’t those battles already been won?” Well, we can’t declare victory just yet, but we do have forward momentum. For example, flip forward a few pages to the epic-length article by Lynne Robinson, the remarkable woman who is resilient enough to be married to me for 30 years this month. Lynne has spent much of the year chronicling the amazing journeys of remarkable women from around the world in pursuing careers in materials science and engineering. It is a great paper, and it has made for great dinnertime conversation for weeks. Not surprisingly, one of the women mentioned is TMS President Elizabeth Holm, the remarkable woman with whom I spend much of my professional time. I greatly enjoy collaborating with Liz and am continually energized by her enthusiasm, clarity of thought, pragmatism, and pursuit of excellence. Liz’s passion for diversity in the materials (and tomato) field will become clear when you read her Presidential Perspective. Diversity is much more than a word to her; it is a recipe for excellence.

Liz’s advocacy for diversity is so great that she is compounding her volunteer commitment by serving as conference chair of the first TMS summit to identify issues, best practices, and solutions to achieving greater diversity and inclusion in the minerals, metals, and materials sectors. The summit will focus on the under-representation of gender and race, particularly in the United States, from the perspectives of government, academia, and industry. It will have a culminating emphasis on developing personal skills and tools. To be held in the summer of 2014, the summit is cosponsored by the Society for Mining, Metallurgy and Exploration and the American Institute of Mining, Metallurgical, and Petroleum Engineers. Watch the TMS website and the pages of *JOM* to learn details of this nascent event.

While the conference itself should be a landmark event, I am especially appreciative that it is giving us the opportunity to better acquaint the world with Ellen Swallow Richards. Not only was she the first female member of AIME (1877), but she was the first woman to be admitted to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (and, reportedly, the first woman admitted to a scientific school of any kind). Impressively, she is credited with creating the field of “ecology,” which she called “Oekology,” and she worked in extractive metallurgy among other technologies. According to the National Women’s Hall of Fame, Richards was the “first woman professional chemist in the nation, and played a major role to open scientific education and the scientific professions to women.” Despite all of this, Richards is low-profile-to-invisible in our traditional pantheon of materials heroes. She is referenced here and there, but quietly and without fanfare—much, it seems, like this remarkable woman herself.

We’re about to help change that, as the July summit will elevate the profile of diversity for today and tomorrow . . . and for the late nineteenth century!



James J. Robinson
Executive Director

JOM

184 Thorn Hill Road
Warrendale, PA 15086, USA
Telephone: (724) 776-9000
Fax: (724) 776-3770
Web: jom.tms.org
E-Mail: jom@tms.org

PUBLISHER

James J. Robinson

JULY GUEST EDITORS

**Magnetic Properties of Materials
Magnetic Materials Committee**

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