



CISCO

CONSTRUCTION NEWS BRIEFS

Construction Industry Service Corporation - www.cisco.org - 630.472.9411 - Dan Allen, Executive Director

"DEN MOM" JOHNETTA RYAN TO RETIRE JUNE 1ST



In the words of Frank Sinatra, Johnetta Ryan did it her way.

After 20 years as the Director of CISCO's Education to Careers Program, Johnetta is hanging up her air horn and tool bag (items she brought to every Hands-On Fair). What she leaves behind is a method of working with apprenticeship coordinators, teachers, counselors and students that was truly unique, persuasive and inspiring.

"I'm proud of the fact that I helped get the word out about the trades to tens of thousands of people and was able to build relationships with different organizations," she said. "Working with my co-workers and the apprenticeship coordinators, who have been like my kids has been wonderful. The coordinators call me Den Mom."



Johnetta enjoys a lighter moment at a Hands-On Expo with CISCO Board Member Maurice King (left), Dan Allen (top right) and some students and teachers.

Johnetta was hired on January 15, 2001, coming from IBEW Local 21, where she was a Business Agent and represented AT&T.

"I felt like I was a perfect fit here at



Johnetta, who received the MacGruder Lifetime Achievement Award in 2018 is pictured with (from left) Dan Allen, CISCO Executive Director, Tim Marabella, GLCA Executive Director, Jim Allen, President, BAC-ADC1 and S.J. Peters, CISCO Board Secretary.

CISCO, because I was helping people to find career paths, similar to what I was doing at my previous job," she said.

Johnetta's legacy will always be that she spent 20 years working with the skilled trades by promoting career opportunities within the trades' world-class apprenticeship training centers.

She brought a unified message to: Community colleges, high schools, middle schools, community groups, veterans organizations, women's groups, faith-based organizations, Boy Scouts/Explorers, non-violent offenders and school counselors.

When asked what she will miss the most, she said, "Everything! People would tell me 'we heard that you are the expert'. I will miss being the expert and talking with adults," she joked.

Johnetta has a lot of great memories from her time working with students and recalled the "best memories" are the students who came up to her and wanted more information and would contact her later.

She added that her first Executive Director Rich Blackwell told her - "as long as you reach one person, you've reached someone who is truly interested."

"Apprentices are the lifeblood of this industry," Dan Allen said. "Johnetta poured her heart and soul into CISCO's mission, and she is responsible for countless careers of young men and women who have entered the trades over the last 20 years."

"She will be greatly missed by numerous CISCO friends and supporters. She has left a strong foundation for both the industry and her successor to succeed," he added.

JAMILLAH MUHAMMAD STEPS IN AS NEW ETC DIRECTOR



Welcome to Jamillah Muhammad, CISCO's new Education-to-Careers Director. Jamillah comes to CISCO with impressive credentials - a 10-

year Journeyman Electrician who is currently an instructor at IBEW NECA Technical Institute in Alsip. As a result, Jamillah possesses working knowledge of apprenticeship programs.

"I am excited to begin my journey with CISCO and helping students and adults understand the benefits of a career in the union construction industry," she said. "I have big shoes to fill as Johnetta Ryan, has built many strong relationships."

Jamillah is active as a mentor with Chicago Women in Trades, a delegate of the Chicago Federation of Labor, and serves as a Board Member of the IBEW/CFL Scholarship Committee.

More news and photos on the back page.

CISCO ON THE MOVE

JOHNETTA RYAN'S FAREWELL MESSAGE TO THE TROOPS

For everything, there is a beginning and an end. A dawn and a dusk. This is true for careers, as well. When I began my career at AT&T in 1970, I never would have guessed that after thirty years there, I would begin another career, one that would leave me with twenty years of memories, challenges, and accomplishments that I could never have foreseen. Now, the sun is setting on my second career and my time at CISCO is drawing to a close. Effective June 1st, 2021, I will be retiring as the Director of Education to Careers.

The Construction Industry Service Corporation (CISCO) was started in 1988. Along with it came the Education to Careers program, with one of its major aims being to assist minorities and women in getting into the union construction trades. In 2001, I was hired by Richard Blackwell, my friend and mentor from the phone company, to head the Education to Careers department. Rich taught me a great deal about labor even before CISCO, and after hiring me, taught me a lot about public speaking. Believe it or not, the "unafraid to speak" Johnetta that you know today was once so terrified of public speaking that she called in sick due to her own bundle of nerves on the day of her very first CISCO presentation. How the times have changed.

I have given two decades of my life to CISCO. While I would never say that it was always a good experience, it was a memorable experience and together we made a difference. I have been to hundreds of different schools, church groups, and community organizations – spreading the word about careers in construction. I have had the pleasure of working with so many new organizations, training them and imparting my "wisdom" for all its worth. During that time, I have met so many wonderful people. It would be impossible for me to mention all of you individually, but I would be remiss

not to highlight the superb apprentice coordinators. I cannot count how many career days, hands-on events, and meetings I attended. I've had the honor and privilege of working with some of the finest leaders from the unions, the contractors' associations, and other allied groups that all are committed to bringing new blood into the amazing construction industry right here in our extended community. It's been one of the great pleasures of my life to be considered your "den mother."

Over the years, there have been many who have called CISCO home, and I have no doubt that more than once I have managed to have driven each and every one of them just a little crazy. No one spends a few years with me and maintains a firm grip on their sanity. But I must single out the reigning champ, Julia Mulvey. She has been the Office Manager at CISCO for twenty years. She started on the very same day that I did. During my entire tenure at CISCO, Julia has been the one constant, and miraculously, she has managed to always exercise patience and humor and therefore has remained perfectly sane. If Julia can hang on to her sanity in the month I have left, she should win a prize. CISCO is a busy, productive and forward-thinking organization. She helps keep it organized, and CISCO is fortunate to have Julia.

In my time, I have had the privilege of working under three Executive Directors of CISCO. The first, as I already mentioned, was Richard Blackwell. He showed me the way to my second career, and I would not be writing this if not for him. Rich was succeeded by John Brining, who brought his own approach to our organization. And finally, there is the current Executive Director, Dan Allen, who has been another great advocate to Education to Careers. Dan is a man who is so devoted, friendly and good-hearted that you simply cannot get mad at him even if you disagree (which is very rare). But disagreeing and being disagreeable are

two different things. Knowing we both (and we all) want what is best for CISCO and the industry has made Dan and me outstanding partners.

So many memories have come out of my two decades with CISCO. I've spoken to thousands of students, weathered the "Great Recession" when so many struggled, and on one remarkable occasion, I was presented with a unique symbol (a Bible) to help curb my sometimes salty language. But I must have done something right in the Lord's eyes. I can think of no other explanation for all the good times and great friends I've made while at CISCO than the providence of God.

Though I can say unequivocally that I am overjoyed that I have reached a point where I can put up my feet and relax, it would be untrue to say that I won't miss this wonderful job for this important organization. Saying goodbye to CISCO and everyone who contributes to its ongoing mission is bittersweet. Now the time has finally come for me to sit back and enjoy life. Fifty years, in total, I have given to Organized Labor. My heart and my thoughts will always be with the working men and women who have made, and continue to make, our country great. I will watch with hope and pride as a new generation takes the reins. I wish my successor, Jamillah Muhammad, all the luck in the world as she begins her career as CISCO's next Director of Education to Careers. You've got a lot of great people to meet out there, to learn from and to teach. Your life will never be the same, and in the process, you will change lives by helping them reach their potential and earn a living they can and will be proud of until (and after) the day they retire. To all of you – thank you and farewell!

