



**Vicki Seppala**

**General Manager, Climax Mine  
Freeport-McMoRan Inc.**

**2019 Medal of Merit Recipient**

Non-traditional was a label used to describe Vicki Seppala when she returned to college. Returning to university after working in another industry was difficult but a path desired in her quest for a better life for herself and young son. It was just a Mine and Geological Engineering recruiting brochure on the science wall at Glendale Community College, but it caught her eye and Seppala soon found herself moving to Tucson with her fourth grade son and enrolling in the University of Arizona Geological Engineering program where she earned her Bachelor of Science Degree. She received scholastic scholarships each year and graduated with honors; she also was chosen the 1994 Outstanding Senior for the College of Engineering and Mines.

After graduation, although the industry was in a down cycle, Seppala was hired as a Geological Engineer with the Phelps Dodge Sierrita mine (now Freeport-McMoRan Inc.). Her leadership skills and enthusiasm of new challenges propelled Seppala into operational roles of increasing responsibility rapidly rising to Mine Operations & Maintenance Superintendent. In 2003 she was promoted to Mine Technology Manager responsible for investigating, developing, and introducing new/existing technology to Freeport's copper mines in North and South America.

In 2006 Seppala was promoted to Mine Manager at Freeport's Candelaria operation near Copiapo, Chile, becoming the first woman Mine Manager in Chile. The Mining Industry in Chile was rapidly changing with respect to women in nontraditional roles at that time, and Seppala became a part of that change. She helped introduce women haul truck drivers at the Candelaria operation.

After 4 ½ years in Chile, Seppala transferred back to the United States landing at Morenci as the Mine Manager, Fragmentation & Loading and subsequently the Mine Engineering Manager. In 2014 she was appointed Director, Corporate Safety responsible for planning, directing and leading the implementation of safety programs and policies for Freeport-McMoRan Americas.

In July 2018, Seppala was promoted to General Manager of the Climax Molybdenum Mine near Leadville, Colorado.

Born in Rogers, Arkansas, Seppala graduated high school in Glendale, Arizona. Away from work Seppala cherishes time spent with her son, Clay Seppala, his wife, LeAna, and their three daughters, Gwen, Charlotte and Rachel. Seppala thrives on adventure through work, travel and outdoor activities.

Seppala has spent her entire mining career at Freeport, is an active SME Member, sits on the Board of Directors of the Lowell Institute of Mineral Resources, and engages with many Women in Mining groups.