

## Saluting Our Veterans

As we observe Veterans Day, we take a moment to honor those who served our country.

Since the Port Authority's founding in 1921, veterans have played an integral role at the agency. For more than a century, agency employees have answered the call of duty, and countless others have returned home from serving to join the PA to continue their legacy of service. Today, there are hundreds of veterans within our ranks. They are your colleagues, working beside you in our offices and in the field at our facilities.

This month, the [Port Authority Veterans Association \(PAVA\)](#) is spotlighting several employees who served. Established in 2016, the primary goal of PAVA is to foster an active community among Port Authority professionals – military veterans and supportive colleagues alike – and lead agency efforts to provide support to all veteran, retired, active duty and reserve members of the U.S. Armed Forces. PAVA unites our agency's veterans and military supporters, enabling our members to share their experiences and strengthen networks across the agency, while further developing leaders in the PA. Additionally, PAVA will support the agency by attracting and retaining talented military candidates and supporting their successful transition to the civilian workforce.

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## APNG Speed Networking Event Creates 'Pathways to Partnership'

The Administrative Professionals Networking Group (APNG) recently held its annual administrative professionals speed networking event, bringing together employees from across the agency to form new partnerships to success.

The third annual event, titled *Pathways to Partnership: Leaders and Admins Unite*, was held on October 16 at the Port Authority Technical Center (PATC) and was filled with excitement and connectivity as enthusiastic participants gathered to meet and chat.

Through a series of fast-paced speed rounds, leaders engaged in meaningful conversations with admins, fostering new relationships and mentorship opportunities. What made this event truly exceptional was the active involvement of sponsors representing each participating department, ensuring a comprehensive and engaging networking experience for all attendees.



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## Engineering Department Honors Late Chief Environmental Engineer

The Engineering Department recently held a memorial ceremony in honor of the late **Robert Pruno, P.E.**



Robert Pruno

On October 10, family and friends of Bob, who was also affectionally known as "superman," gathered together to share fond memories and reminisce on his unflappable demeanor and the legacy he left behind. Bob served for 37 years at the agency, including 20 years as Chief Environmental Engineer. His environmental expertise and calm disposition

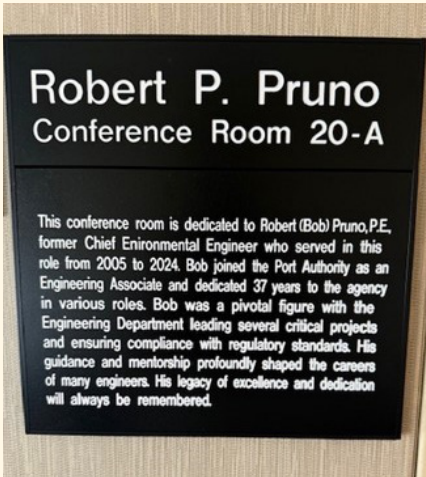
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## Engineering Department Honors Late Chief Environmental Engineer

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guided the agency through many challenges and impactful projects. Bob's mentorship and guidance profoundly shaped the careers of many engineers.

In Bob's memory, the northwest conference room on the 20th floor at 4 World Trade Center has been named the Robert P. Pruno Conference Room.



## PARA WANTS YOU

The Port Authority Retirees Association (PARA) invites active and retired Port Authority and PATH employees

to join its almost 4,000 members.

PARA allows you to stay current with news about the agency, its employees and retirees, and with state and federal issues of importance to retirees, such as benefit, pension, and Social Security updates.

The membership fee is \$20 a year. Visit [www.paranynj.org](http://www.paranynj.org) for more information and to sign up for PARA's email bulletins.



## PATH Deputy Director Honored as a 'Top Woman in Rail'

PATH Deputy Director **Sanchita Banerjee-Jimenez** has been recognized as one of North America's top 'Women in Rail' for 2024 by Railway Age Magazine, a leading industry publication. She was one of 25 women rail executives selected on the basis of career achievement, leadership skills, innovation, and professional experience.

Sanchita directs PATH's Operations and Customer Experience divisions, strategizing and delivering programs that keep the trains running and provide optimal safety, reliability, and comfort for PATH's tens of millions of riders each year. She was chosen by an independent panel of judges and her story will be featured in the publication's November issue.

In a career spanning more than 20 years of service across the industry, Sanchita has distinguished herself as an influential leader in transportation operations and the collection, analysis, and application of data and best practices to build better transit systems.

"Sanchita is a dynamic and effective leader who has succeeded everywhere she's been during her tenure at the Port Authority," said PATH Director/General Manager **Clarelle DeGraffe**. "This award is a well-deserved tribute to her leadership and her creative spirit."

Previously, Sanchita held senior positions as General Manager of the Kennedy Airport AirTrain in New York, Operations Leader at Metrolinx in Toronto, and Assistant Director with the Port Authority Office of Chief Operations Officer. She was appointed to her current position in January 2024.



Sanchita Banerjee-Jimenez

## STAFF ACHIEVEMENTS

### Engineer Earns DBIA Certification

Congratulations to **Ted Solages**, Project Principal within the Engineering/Architecture Design Division, who recently completed the Design-Build Institute of America's (DBIA) comprehensive education and certification testing program to achieve the design-build industry's highest designation as a nationally certified Design-Build Professional.

The DBIA certification requires up to six years of substantial, documented, direct project experience in design-build project delivery as a prerequisite for certification.



Ted Solages

## CALENDAR

### PAVA: Veterans Voice Discussion

Wednesday, November 13, 1 to 3 p.m. 4 World Trade Center 23rd floor Board Room. Join together with the Port Authority Veterans Association (PAVA) for its 3rd Annual Veterans Voice panel discussion. Executive Director **Rick Cotton** and PAVA leadership will kick off the event with the unveiling of a recently relocated World War II plaque, which honors PA employees who served in the war. This year's guest speakers include Terrance Hayes (Deputy Assistant Secretary, Office of Public and Intergovernmental Affairs) and Marine Gunnery Sergeant Eliezer Gomez Logistics (Chief for Marine Aircraft Group 49 Detachment B).

[Register for the event.](#)

### Wanted: Future City Volunteers

Saturday, January 11 (NJ) and Saturday, January 18 (NYC). Future City is a national program that challenges middle school students to learn engineering principles the fun way. Help power the next generation of engineers as a volunteer, mentor, judge, for at-home work and on competition day. Also needed are volunteers to assist in the successful operation of the day's events: for the entire day, or just a portion if that is your availability. There are separate New Jersey and New York City events. [View the flyer here.](#) For more information, contact **Scott Lubarsky** at [slubarsky@panynj.gov](mailto:slubarsky@panynj.gov).

### WORKING ADVANTAGE DISCOUNT PROGRAM

Port Authority employees and retirees can take advantage of hundreds of discounts at stores, theaters, theme parks, and more through Working Advantage, the PA's Employee Discount Program partner. Visit [www.workingadvantage.com](http://www.workingadvantage.com) and use the PA Member ID number, 405042634.



## PA Transit Tech Lab's Innovative Initiatives Recognized by ITS NJ

The Port Authority, through its innovative Transit Tech Lab initiatives, was proudly represented and recognized by the Intelligent Transportation Society of New Jersey (ITS NJ).

The October 9 conference, with the theme 'Smart and Safe Transportation,' showcased innovative solutions and best practices in transportation technology.

The PA's Transit Tech Lab pilot with Convo Communication stood out as a method to enhance the Customer Experience and a technology that can help bridge the gap when engaging with people who are deaf or hearing impaired. Convo is an on-demand interpreting service that works through a customer's smart phone, putting them in direct contact with an ASL interpreter. The PA placed QR codes throughout customer service stations at the Midtown Bus Terminal, which customers can scan and then engage with an interpreter on live video that helps them and the customer support representative communicate effectively.

Convo's service was viewed as a success by the PA's Transit Tech Lab Team during its 8-week Proof of Concept; the team is looking forward to expanding this service to additional PA facilities, including at PATH, at JFK, LGA, EWR Airports, and with the PAPD, as part of a year-long pilot to test this service at scale.

The PA Transit Tech Lab Team believes this service is a game-changer; and will assist the Port Authority to better communicate with the people it serves.



Natasha Jean Philipp-Cumberbatch, Manager, Corp. Transp., OSEC

## Midtown Bus Terminal Employees Wear Pink for Breast Cancer Awareness

In recognition of Breast Cancer Awareness Month, staff from the Midtown Bus Terminal donned pink shirts throughout October, helping to raise awareness about this critically important cause.



### TRADING POST

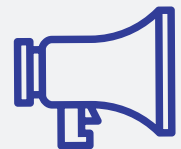
Did you know that you can use the [Trading Post](#) to request an item you're looking for?



Work with your fellow PA employees to get any supplies you may need. Get started [here](#).

### GOT NEWS FOR NEXT TIME?

Do you have news from your team, department or employee group to share in the next PA News? Send it to [panews@panynj.gov](mailto:panews@panynj.gov) by November 8 to be included in the November 15 issue.



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**Christopher Black**  
Tunnel and Bridge Agent,  
Staten Island Bridges  
E-5 /SW2, Navy



Middle, receiving army achievement medal. 2022.

**Nelson Del Valle**  
Port Operations Supervisor,  
New Jersey Marine Terminals  
Chief Warrant Officer 3, Coast Guard



Redeployment assistance and inspection detachment (RAID), assisting U.S-Iraq forces with hazmat and container inspections. 2011.

**Paul Duffy**  
General Patron Services Supervisor,  
GWB, TB&T  
E-5, Navy



Center, supporting Operation Iraqi Freedom, guarding the 2 main oil terminals off the coast of Iraq. 2006.

**Mike Edgerton**  
Manager, Port Security,  
Security Operations Dept.  
Lieutenant Commander, Coast Guard



Second from right, joint U.S. Coast Guard/ Customs and Border Protection boarding team. 2003.

**Hector Eugui**  
Chief Maintenance Supervisor,  
Operations Services, Sign Shop  
Captain / O3, Army



Right, promotion ceremony from First Lieutenant to Captain. 2003.

**Michael Guthy**  
Sr. Program Manager, PATH  
Major, National Guard (Army),  
New York



Field training exercise prior to Afghanistan deployment. 2008.

**Leonid Lapin**  
Police Officer, PAPD  
SrA, Air Force, National Guard (Air),  
New Jersey



Operation Inherent Resolve, mission to thwart ISIS, Syria. 2017.

**Rich Laraway**  
Commercial and Operations Manager,  
EWR Terminal A  
LCDR, Navy



Aboard USS Juneau (LPD 10). 2005.

**Vincent Losada**  
Asst. Director, Facility Security  
Operations, Security Operations Dept.  
Major O-4, Marine Corps



Left, the three forward observers of 3rd Battalion 5th Marine Regiment at Camp Leatherneck, entering Sangin, Afghanistan. 2010.

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## **Bryan Mathews**

Police Officer, PAPD  
Sergeant (USMC)/Technical Sergeant  
(USAF), National Guard (Air),  
New York, Marine Corps



Attending School of Infantry at  
Camp Lejeune, NC. 2005.

## **Michael Mino**

Police Officer, PAPD  
SSG/E6, Army



Paratrooper who left active duty to join the NJ  
National Guard Military Police Co. 2020.

## **Jas Ramos**

IT Service Manager, TEC  
E4, Army



Jas Ramos. 2002.

## **Jean-Paul Richer**

Northeast Regional Account Manager,  
Port  
Petty Officer 1st Class, Coast Guard



Conducting evening area familiarization training  
while on maritime law enforcement and search  
and rescue patrol at USCG Station,  
Sandy Hook, NJ. 2020.

## **Geraldo Silva**

Assistant Police Chief, PAPD  
Sergeant/E-5, Marine Corps



Center, graduation from Marine Corps Recruit  
Depot, Parris Island, SC. 1986.

## **Leon Van Dyke**

General Maintenance Supervisor, Aviation  
1st Lieutenant, National Guard (Army),  
New Jersey



Right, at an outpost on Tiran Island,  
Saudi Arabia. 2004.

## **Paul D. Vigil**

Electrician, EWR  
E-3, Air Force



In the Elite Honor Guard. 1987.

## **Joseph Wein**

Security Manager, Chief Security Office  
Marine Corps



Providing protection detail during meeting  
with an Iraqi minister. 2006.