



# Progress & Perspectives

## WOMEN IN STEEL

Julianne Lord

President, FRC Global Inc.

Julianne Lord has been working in the refractory and electrode supply business for more than 11 years. Most recently, she took the jump into the role of president at FRC Global Inc.

In 2020, Fedmet Resources Corp. unveiled a new name, a new logo, and the next generation of leadership as part of a company restructuring plan and transition to FRC Global. The rebranding efforts recognize the passing of the baton to the next generation. It has become a true family business with all three daughters of the original founder, Mark Mattar, taking roles in executive leadership. The three sisters, Julianne Lord, Leanne Pate and Dianne Detwiler, are bringing fresh energy to FRC Global, the next evolution of the company. Lord has taken on the role of president, Pate is director of people operations, and Detwiler is director of electrodes and product manager of black refractories. FRC Global is in the process of obtaining the Women-Owned Business Certification and the company expects to be certified in the next few months.

“This is an exciting time. There are not many refractory and electrode companies that are 100% owned by women,” Lord said.

With new leadership comes a new vision. FRC’s vision is to be the problem solvers for the next generation in the high-temp world. Lord is young, energetic and passionate about creating positive change.

“We are living in a unique time where profitability is not the single goal of a business. Sustainability will be a focus at FRC Global. Understanding what sustainable practices are and how to implement them into a business is imperative for every organization. Our industry values are shifting, and industry vendors need to shift as well.”

Lord took the time to answer a few questions for *Iron & Steel Technology*.

### Where did your education and career start?

I received a B.S. degree in entrepreneurship and marketing from the State University of New York at Plattsburgh, followed by an M.B.A. in corporate sustainability from Humboldt State University in California. I joined Fedmet Resources Corp. in 2010 as the marketing manager and spent the first few years of my career in a marketing and sales support role. After about five years into my time with Fedmet, I joined the leadership team and was the only woman on this team for many years. Today, I am proud to say that our leadership team, and the company as a whole, is more diverse than ever in its history.

### Why did you choose the steel industry?

I grew up in and around the industry. My father started Fedmet in 1990, so I was exposed to the business for my entire life. I was always interested in what he was working on and saw him grow the business from the ground up. Often included in business trips and meetings both at home and abroad, I knew I wanted to be a part of it.

### Talk about the support you’ve received in your career.

I have received so much support from the incredible employees we have. We have a great team, each member willing to take time out of their day to teach the younger generation about our industry. They are eager to collaborate on new ideas and provide instruction when needed.



**Julianne is pictured with her sisters, Leanne Pate (left), director of people operations, and Dianne Detwiler (right), director of electrodes and product manager of black refractories.**

I joined the AISTech Young Professional group when it first started, and of course now the Women in Steel group.

Both my parents supported my career by giving me the confidence to lead. My father instilled his passion for the industry, and my mother taught me to be independent and value personal responsibility.

### What are you most proud of in your career?

I am incredibly proud of our restructuring and rebranding in 2020. After a lot of thought, my sisters and I decided to create something fresh and new. There were many moving parts to make this happen, but in the end FRC Global is for the next generation. Going forward we are building something incredible, and I am excited to be leading FRC Global into the future!

Over the past two years, we have invested heavily into technology, including an enterprise resource planning system that will help us increase innovation, efficiency and transparency. It was a substantial undertaking, but I am very proud of my entire staff for the hard work and dedication it took learn and adapt to a new system.

### What has been the best thing about being a woman in this industry?

The best thing about being a woman in the steel industry is having the opportunity to be a visionary for the future. When asked a question such as “what do you do for a living?” I have the opportunity to teach someone about an industry that is generally unfamiliar to most people. Steel is in and around every part of our lives, and

to create steel, you need refractories, electrodes and a variety of other products.

### What advice do you have for young women who are interested in a career in a male-dominated field?

I would say “go for it” and be confident in who you are and what you bring to the table. Understand that this industry is in the middle of an evolution. We expect to see an entire generation of industry workers retire in the next 5–8 years, which will coincide with millennials stepping into leadership roles across the board. This is a great opportunity for women, but it will have its challenges. There may be a time when you need to have a difficult or uncomfortable conversation, but let the conversation create a space for growth. Ask for help from the people around you, and never be afraid to set boundaries. Most importantly, stay curious and ask questions.

Whether you are working at a plant or an industry supply company, there are so many opportunities out there right now. If you work for the right company, you will have the ability to advance and create impact.

My last piece of advice is to think outside of the box when looking for a job in the industry. There are opportunities for women with all different kinds of skill sets. My sisters and I all have different backgrounds, and we each bring something unique and valuable to our organization. I come from a marketing and business management background. Leanne has a background and degrees in sociology, leadership and has an M.B.A. Dianne has a background in process engineering and has a ceramic engineering degree from Alfred University. Finding the right fit in an organization can make all the difference. ♦