

# APPRENTICESHIP



Training Instructor Kathleen Barber

## A Word From a Training Director

**Kathleen Barber**

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“When a person enters the skilled construction trades, there is little thought given to the enduring structures we work on throughout our careers. Recently I was attending the California Apprenticeship Council meeting in Pacifica, California. As I approached the hotel, there was a shimmering light of remembrance about the property. As I walked through the corridors, I realized that I worked on this hotel when I was a second-third year apprentice.

After 33 years, there was a sudden rush of memories from the six months that I spent on the project. It was on this project that I worked with Dennis Agresti. Dennis was an excellent electrician that knew so many tricks of the trade. He mentored me through the process of hammering up boxes and running Romex from outlet to outlet.

When the hotel project ended, I went on to work on many other projects and eventually finished my apprenticeship in 1988. As a journeyman, I have worked with many skilled and experienced people that generously shared their knowledge. Through apprenticeship, and with the skills I learned with on-the-job training, my career advanced from a journeyman to a foreman. And eventually, general foreman.

While I was working in the electrical industry, I returned to school and earned a bachelor’s degree. Since I was ‘educated,’ I went to the apprenticeship to see if there was an opening to become an instructor, and eventually, there was one. I continued teaching until the opportunity to apply for the training director became available. I applied, I interviewed and I got hired. That is where I have been for the past 18 years.

Being involved in the apprenticeship world has been very rewarding. There are so many facets to the apprenticeship community. My journey into Apprenticeship was and continues to be in the skilled trades. Now we have the chance for other professions to join the apprenticeship community, such as registered nurses or health care providers.

Apprenticeship is not limiting; it is expansive, opening channels for people to enter into the work arena with the benefit of being trained and earning an income.”