



JANMARIE CONNOR

Taking the 'Next Step Forward'

By Rebecca Patrick

At the recent Indiana Women's Collaborative Luncheon, the moment belonged to Janmarie Connor. As president and CEO of Connor Painting in Indianapolis, she has spent nearly three decades breaking barriers in a field where women leaders are still the exception. But it's not just her business success that drew applause – it's her unwavering commitment to those around her, inspiring both her colleagues and giving back to her community.

The Indiana Chamber of Commerce celebrated Connor as its 2025 Empower Award winner. Now in its second year, the honor is given to an individual who has made significant contributions by empowering women in various spheres of life. And as a result, has had a meaningful impact on her organization and larger community. The recipient is specifically recognized for leadership and impact in advancing women in business.

Ask anyone at Connor Painting, and they'll tell you: Janmarie Connor is known for helping people "map the pathway" to their own success, taking genuine pride in seeing others achieve their goals. Connor's knack for spotting hidden strengths and encouraging growth has become a hallmark of her leadership style.

Like mother like daughter

The vibrant Connor doesn't wear it on her sleeve, but her triumphs and wisdom are hard-won.

She lost her mother, an immigrant from Perú, South America, far too soon.

"There isn't anything in my life that hasn't been fueled by this loss," Connor declares.

"She was unlike anyone I've ever known. ... In her short life, she became the Honorary Consul of Peru in Indianapolis and hosted dignitaries from around the world in our humble home. She founded the first Spanish language program for elementary students in Lawrence Township. She spread the Christian message of service and unity with migrant workers working in the Indiana fields.

"She was elegant, beautiful, an artist, seamstress and extraordinary cook. And all while she suffered for many years with incurable cancer," Connor recounts.

"She left very big shoes to fill. (But) when things feel difficult or beyond my reach, I take a deep breath, think of my mother and take the next step forward."

Connor's approach as a leader in her community is also shaped by the influence of her mother's experience, who came to Indianapolis on a scholarship to what was then Marian College.

"That generosity and opportunity given to my mother impacted her life tremendously and serves as a great motivation for everything I try to do as leader and why I'm motivated to pay it forward and do what I can to be a role model for female professionals at various stages of their careers," Connor stresses.

For women coming up in business, Connor offers this advice: "Invest in yourself. Stay physically, mentally and emotionally strong – and steer clear of people, places and things that don't lift you up. The idea that women advance without hard, valiant and excellent work always makes me smile. With all the responsibilities and interruptions we navigate, merit naturally follows a determined woman. And above all, be kind – to everyone, especially when it's hard."

Impacting her company and beyond

A trailblazer in the construction industry, Connor has profitably grown her organization year over year through innovation, branching out and human-centered leadership.

Connor Painting has become a trusted partner to facility professionals tackling high-complexity projects in highly regulated, demanding environments. Among its clients are Allison Transmission, Corteva Agriscience, Indiana University, IU Health, Roche Pharmaceuticals, as well as the cities of Indianapolis and Fishers.

Connor relays the company is poised for even greater growth.

“We’ve been testing and investing in products, services and equipment innovations at the leading edge of our industry. The facility owners and management pros we serve – in healthcare, education, government, food and beverage, and life sciences – need trade partners who can scale, sync with their systems, work safely and sustainably, and truly innovate with them. Our move into mobile laser technology does exactly that,” she explains.

“For decades, rust and coatings have been stripped away with sandblasting and harsh chemicals – it’s messy, dangerous and tough on the environment. This laser surface prep changes that. It’s faster, cleaner, safer and more cost effective, without the toxins or damage. We believe it’s a real game-changer – not just for us, but for our customers who count on us to protect and continually improve the way their facilities and other critical infrastructure are cared for.”

Connor also inspires and thinks big picture when it comes to her larger community. For example, she works with La Plaza’s Summer Discovery program in Indianapolis, where she speaks to youth about business ownership and the importance of mental health and well-being in achieving their full potential.

A certified meditation trainer in her spare time, Connor also has empowered thousands through free training on the simple practice of establishing inner calm and building peaceful, joyful lives.

As she continues to transform, mentor and give back, Connor is



Janmarie Connor’s impact extends far beyond her company. “She’s been intentional about giving back – through volunteering, corporate sponsorships, community partnerships and board leadership – in ways that align with Connor Painting’s expertise and resources,” says Indiana Chamber President and CEO Vanessa Green Sindors (also pictured).

not just shaping the future of her business and sector – she’s moving a new generation to dream bigger, work harder and lead with heart.

“I’ve learned firsthand that when women rise, their strength creates ripples that can transform families, workplaces and communities for generations.” ■

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