



Barbara A. Filas

Barbara A. Filas is a third-generation miner, a second-generation mining engineer, and a licensed professional engineer. Her grandfather emigrated from Finland to work in the copper mines in Bisbee, and her father, Carl Appelin, worked in those same mines from the age of 15. Like her father, Barbara earned her Mining Engineering degree from The University of Arizona.

Filas started her career in the underground coal mines. She joined the coal industry shortly after passage of the Federal Surface Mining, Control and Reclamation Act of 1977. At the time, this new law shifted emphasis toward obtaining permits for the coal mines and preparation plants that she had been working for. This resulted in her unplanned specialization in the environmental and compliance aspects of mining. In 1987, Filas left a soft coal market to apply her environmental expertise to the booming gold mining business in Eureka, Nevada.

In 1989, Filas opted to leave active mine operations to join the Denver-based consulting firm Knight Piésold and Co. to specialize in permitting, compliance, and the preparation of international social and environmental impact assessments, action plans and management systems. She is internationally recognized for her expertise in environmental and social responsibility having worked in both the developed and developing world, with project experience on six continents. She is currently a Partner with Filas Engineering and Environmental Services and a Professor of Practice at the Colorado School of Mines. Ms. Filas has volunteered thousands of hours to the mining industry. She has worked with the World Bank, mining associations, regulatory authorities, and other interest groups to influence the direction of laws, rules and guidance documents to assure that the industry remains politically and economically viable into the future.

Through her active involvement with the Society for Mining, Metallurgy & Exploration (SME), she has served in numerous positions and committees. Notably, she was instrumental in helping to create the Environmental Division in 1997, the Student Mentor Program in 1999, and served as the Society's 48th President and its first female President in 2005.

Ms. Filas served as an AIME Trustee from 2008 to 2012 and on the Executive Committee of WAAIME. She has received numerous awards including the SME President's Citation in 2000 and 2019, St. Barbara's Day Award in 2013, AIME Honorary Membership in 2011, Mining Foundation of the Southwest Medal of Merit 2008, SME Environmental Distinguished Service 2001, SME Ivan B. Rahn Education Award 2001, and the SME Fellow Award in 2001.