

## **Director of Sustainability at Leopardo Companies - Patty Lloyd**

Introduction ([00:02](#)):

Welcome to Green Building Matters. The original and most popular podcast focused on the green building movement. Your host is Charlie Cichetti, one of the most credentialed experts in the green building industry. And one of the few to be honored as a LEED Fellow. Each week, Charlie welcomes a green building professional from around the globe to share their war stories, career advice, and unique insight into how sustainability is shaping the built environment. Settle in, grab a fresh cup of coffee and get ready to find out why Green Building Matters.

Charlie ([00:34](#)):

Hi everybody. Welcome to the next episode of the Green Building Matters Podcast. I'm your host, Charlie Cichetti. I've got a LEED Fellow with me, Patty Lloyd is coming to us from just outside of Chicago. She's with Leopardo Company as the director of sustainability. Patty, how are you doing today?

Patty ([00:52](#)): Oh, I'm doing great.

Charlie ([00:52](#)):

I really get excited with these interviews. We get to learn more about how you get into the green building movement. What are you up to today and what are you looking forward to? I always like to ask my podcast guests to take us back. Where did you grow up and where'd you go to school?

Patty ([01:09](#)):

My early part of my life was in Ohio and Michigan and those formative years, we had a lot of exposure to the great outdoors. My grandma has 33 acres in Michigan that we ran wild on. My other grandparents had a farm. I

got a lot of those inputs that I didn't realize how much they contributed to my career in sustainability until much later. When I was about 9 or 10, we moved to Oklahoma and I grew up in ADA. Oklahoma went to school in Stillwater but didn't graduate from there. Spent some time there and I worked at a really cool pizza place called Hideaway Pizza. A really formative thing for me because I'd never recycled in my life before. We recycled our beer bottles. We had the fryer grease, that guy would come in a truck and pick it up to make biodiesel and was really informative to me. Later in life, I got my associates degree in business. When I was 40, I got my BS in environmental management. I'm currently a master's student at the University of Wisconsin. Hopefully I'll have my master's degree in a year and a half or so.

Charlie ([02:28](#)):

Continuous learning. I love it. I'm sure some of nature help influence you, but it all happened at a pizza shop. I love this story already. Sustainability though, and maybe as you were getting into your career and then getting some of your degrees, why buildings and green buildings? Was there an aha moment?

Patty ([02:48](#)):

I interviewed a lot of young people about how you get into sustainability and I didn't come into it the traditional way. I actually was a project assistant when I started at my company and our first LEED project was handed over the reins to do the documentation on. None of us knew what it was and from there, that's where the green building career started for me. I began working on more green buildings. I became the subject expert within my company, and started gaining those green building credentials. Almost all of my education credentials have been earned while at Leopardo, which I've been here for 17 years. I've had a lot of time to work on it.

Charlie ([03:34](#)):

Oh man, no kidding. You've got a lot of credentials, maybe this is a good segue to talk about some of those. Congrats on your LEED Fellow, ELL AP, LFA. Tell us about credentials. What does that mean to you as you built this green building career?

Patty ([03:53](#)):

I'm a big believer in third party verification and in credentials. It gives a level of credibility and that's why I first got my LEED AP. I was not in a position, my company where I should have been getting it, other people in higher positions that were winning work and chasing work. They were getting their LEED AP, but I was actually the person in my company that was working on the green projects. I didn't tell anybody, I studied for like a year and a half and went and took it, but it really elevated me in my career path and helped me move forward. I now chair for the US GBC. Without that first step to getting the credential, those doors wouldn't, wouldn't have been opened for me. I later got my WELL AP because our office in Chicago was going for WELL certification. I thought that it would help us. And then we built several WELL projects and then I got the LFA, the living future accreditation when I took over running the Chicago Living Future Collaborative. All of my credentials have been proposed in my career and in my company. They've been a very rewarding,

Charlie ([05:08](#)):

I'm a big fan of credentials. We do a lot here at our education company, GBEs. Again, congrats on the LEED Fellow as WELL. Let's kind of build on that. Did you have any mentors though, as you're putting together this career?

Patty ([05:24](#)):

I didn't start my career until a little later. I was probably in my early thirties, but my boss who's still, my boss Pier cover was an amazing mentor to me and still is. He challenged me. He gave me, like, one of the best pieces

of advice, "You're interested in sustainability, go find an industry association out there that's dealing with it, join it and then become engaged." And that has really been the piece of advice that has kept on giving for me throughout my career. I also had another great mentor, George Tasky. He was doing sustainability at Leo Pardot before I did. He really helped me navigate my, I call it my "extracurriculars", like my engagement with these nonprofits that are working on sustainability outside of Leopardo, and really engaged me as a volunteer and challenged me to step up and speak up. I've had some really great mentors internally.

Charlie ([06:24](#)):

It's fantastic. I'm a big fan of giving a shout out to those that have either influenced us or opened the door. Let's talk a little bit about your company that you've been out for almost 18 years. Tell us about Leopardo and what kind of work you do. Tell us about the growth of the firm.

Patty ([06:42](#)):

Like you said, at Leopardo for 17 years, I joined in 2004. We're a general contractor based in Hoffman Estates, Illinois. We're currently working all over the nation where we have a lot of markets residential, multifamily, healthcare, corporate community aviation. We do a lot of tenant interiors. I'm happy that I've been able to really push, pursue and work on sustainable projects, in my time here, as WELL as addressing those corporate level sustainability initiatives that are directly related to your operations. It's been a great, great company. It's a first-generation family company. It's been about 45 years that they've been in business, started by one brother with his additional, three brothers working here. It's been amazing, the work, the family and we have a lot of families that work here. We had a recent meeting and they said we have over 20 family groups working at Leopardo. Fathers and sons, daughters, cousins, brothers, and it's really prevalent in our field forces with our carpenters and painters and stuff. It's a really cool thing.

Charlie ([07:58](#)):

I think construction can be one of those industries where that legacy in that family. And that's really cool that you all have embraced that within your company. As you look back at Patty, what are some accomplishments you're really proud of?

Patty ([08:14](#)):

The most recent is that of a LEED Fellow. I'm not one to pat myself on the shoulder a lot, but that one felt really, really good. Definitely was an accomplishment in an area and with peer groups that I so deeply respect, then I'm thankful for the really long relationship that I've had and then the leadership and many different roles that I've had with Illinois Green Alliance, which is our local USGBC chapter. They're really an umbrella in Chicago land for green building practitioners. I've been engaged with them for over 15 years. I'm really proud of that mutually beneficial relationship I've had. I'm really proud that I've been able to lead a technical advisory group for LEED. Certainly when I worked on my first LEED project over a decade and a half ago, thinking that one day, my name might be listed in one of those reference manuals was the furthest thing in the world, but it's been an amazing experience for me.

Charlie ([09:18](#)):

Oh, that's cool. Let's unpack that because I'm not sure all of our listeners, of course they're getting more and more familiar with LEED and WELL, and all these great programs, a technical advisory group, a tag committee here,, can you kind of help, tell us more about that, how they, these groups help guide, future iterations and acceptions of LEED. Right. Can you tell us more about that?

Patty ([09:42](#)):

I'm going to assume that everybody that's listening to this understands the LEED rating systems and then different categories there. I chair Mr. Tag, the materials and resources technical advisory group, and it's a really great setup that USG BC has created where you get these technical experts within each category to help refine, revise and write the rating systems. We work on agenda or interpretations. We work on feedback from users about the credits. We're looking at that market transformation and the future of the rating system and how it can best serve the intent of LEED. It's really high, the TAGS are really influential within LEED and it's part of this broader LEED committee structure. I definitely encourage anyone that's interested to ever apply to be on a technical advisory group. There's a commitment, but I really feel that the volunteers are one of the things that gives LEED so much of its strength.

Charlie ([10:50](#)):

Thank you for sharing that. Let's talk about some projects, are there any really cool ones you've worked on you can name? What's also keeping you busy today? What kind of work are you focused on?

Patty ([11:04](#)):

I have one that I can't name, but it's really exciting because they're looking to implement geothermal solar and wind. The trifecta of renewable energies, that's really exciting. I've also been talking recently with quite a few projects that are interested in net zero, which is that there's a lot of future that is beneficial. On a corporate level, I've been really working on leading our ESG platform within our company. What are our ESG goals? What are the metrics to track those? How are we going to report that? An important point for privately held companies because we are required to do that, but we're being asked more and more of our clients. I see it as a real launch pad and a motivator for firms to engage in more meaningful work.

Charlie ([12:02](#)):

That's really, really amazing. You mentioned, WELL we're coming out of this pandemic and we've had a shift from not green buildings to healthy buildings. I want to get back to you as EsG but can you tell us a little bit about how you're navigating healthy buildings right now?

Patty ([12:20](#)):

We have a Chicago office and then Chicago is a great place where you can really see this blast of WELL health, safety rating certified projects. We're in a building that we built and that base building ended up pursuing the WELL health, safety rating after working closely to help us with our WELLs certification. Another project I did in Chicago that's, ELL, V2, platin their base building also ended up pursuing the WELL health safety rating system. I thought that that influence was really meaningful. I don't know that anybody's really looked at that in the industry, but the base building, seeing the positive environmental impacts and then implementing them. With the pandemic we had a lot of things in place that supported the pandemic because our office was WELL certified.

Patty ([13:22](#)):

Most WELL certified projects were finding that out. And that bounce back or that trying to get ready for occupants per hasn't been as difficult because we already had the green cleaning, the touch fixtures, we had a UV, cleaning device that we already used. Those are a few of the measures, but it's been really positive and gives me confidence to get back to the office. I am hoping to see more full WELL projects. The WELL health, safety rating is really awesome, but I do support the FITWELL certification and then another one that I haven't worked with, but that we're seeing a lot of is of course FitWELL, anotr healthy wellness one. I think the focus on this step is going to be so much bigger now than before.

Charlie ([14:12](#)):

Everyone's focused on it and FITwell, we get to do some work. There's the Fitwell full certification and then there's the Fitwell viral response module to kind of go alongside WELL health, safety ratings. Some good options out there to our listeners, make sure you're reading up on, ELL and FITwell. Patty there's also fit well for new construction. That's starting to gain some momentum and that's exciting to see. ESG, I as fortunate to go to Greenbuild with some colleagues here recently in San Diego. If we summed up the theme, it was kind of ESG environmental, social governance is now finally an AEC. You're really attentive to that. What do you think it'll take to make this more of the conversation? Is it project by project? Is it leadership within AEC firms? , Talking to the developers like, but that was kind of a theme. ESG is falling now in AEC. What are your thoughts on that?

Patty ([15:12](#)):

I think a lot of it has to do with the drivers and with your client base. If you have clients that have to formally participate in ESG as a contractor or downstream partner, you have to contribute to that through your practices. On the construction side, particularly I think most firms are getting engaged in it in a reactive way, but I think a lot of, like ourselves are starting to look at it in a proactive way and say, "I did have to fill out the CPP questionnaire because they asked it, I asked it, but then that proactive side is saying, "Okay, as a company, we know this is coming. We knew we already were doing a lot of great things that could easily be wrapped up in there. And then how can we use it as a tool for continuous improvement?" I really see it as a part of strategic planning and finding what's called the sustainability sweet spot for your company. Fortunately some of my schoolwork is right in line with this as I'm going through this exercise with my company, but it is taking the world by storm. ESG is right now.

Charlie ([16:26](#)):



I wholeheartedly agree. Let's talk about the future. One of my favorite questions. Where do you think sustainability and green buildings will be shifting next?

Patty ([16:38](#)):

This question, I'm going to go a little bit off a little bit because it's very easy for me to talk about what I'm working on and where I think net zero energy buildings are obviously going to become a much bigger contributor and no construction is the low hanging fruit. It's so much easier to build something right the first time then to go back and fix it. Embodied carbon is also going to be a bigger focus as we continue to drive down operational carbon. There's going to be a bigger focus on that and embodied carbon through your, your building materials and your supply chain. This is where I think the biggest bang for our buck is going to be in the existing building market. How do we retrofit, weatherize and improve efficiency to help? What is this biggest chunk of the building stock? How do we help them become the largest contributor to reducing the carbon contribution of the built environment? I always ponder that question because I think the existing buildings have a huge piece to play in this.

Charlie ([17:46](#)):

Excellent, excellent answer. Thanks for taking us down that path. Let's talk a little more about you. Some rapid fire questions here. What would you say is your specialty or gifts?

Patty ([17:58](#)):

I'm a generalist, I'm not super well-versed on much of anything, but I know enough about a lot of things to be part of the conversation. I think that where that becomes really useful is I have a great skill of connecting amazing people. They get stuff done with other cool, smart people that know how to get stuff done. I've found definitely in the last decade that networking and understanding how to put the right people together to

make things happen has been definitely a strong point. Another thing that I didn't like to figure out until I was well into adulthood is that I'm a goal oriented person. I set a goal, I worked towards it and then I achieved it. It gives me direction. It gives me a roadmap and that really helps me now, transparently. I never have ever achieved one of my goals on time within the timeframe I set. But I think the important part is that I almost always achieve them. Something I found out was a strength.

Charlie ([19:01](#)):Next question is,any good habits, routines, rituals that you may have?

Patty ([19:08](#)):

I exercise, I try to exercise between three and five times a week. It's a challenge to fit it in. I have three kids. I'm in school and have a full-time job. When I exercise, it really is a mental health thing. It really helps sharpen my mind. I do Jazzercise, I run, I do an elliptical trainer, whatever I can do at this, the point is to be moving. It's not to be in great shape or anything like that. It was a really positive thing that gave me joy.

Charlie ([19:38](#)):What kind of exercise do you like doing, and is it a certain time of day?

Patty ([19:43](#)):

I'm going to get up early in the morning. That's out for me, but I try to squeeze it in some time between after work and before I go to bed. I have three sons and they're always mortified when their friends come over and I'm doing Jazzercise in the living room.

Charlie ([20:01](#)):

That's hilarious. I love it. You're getting it in and it's working for you and thank you for sharing that pro tip. I'm a fan of the bucket list. Are one or

two things on your bucket list you could share with us? Maybe some travel or adventure or write a book about what's on the bucket list.

Patty ([20:22](#)):

Could be a long list. My personal bucket list is I want to see a great concert at Red Rocks. I've never been there. I'd like to ride in a hot air balloon. When I retire, I want to be a competitive runner. That's kind of a more long-term goal because I'm not retiring anytime soon. Professionally, I really want one of the things I feel strongly about doing at Leopardo is really helping us build that resume of net zero and deep green projects. It's something that I feel is important work and that it'll help my company if we can do that.

Charlie ([21:09](#)):

Thank you for sharing. Is there a book you'd recommend that doesn't have to be about green buildings?

Patty ([21:17](#)):

I've given this year a gift that I have been loving called Tribe of Mentors, short advice from the best in the world. It's by Timothy Ferris. Yeah. It's like super cliché that I gave it to people that I was mentoring, but it seemed like a great way to supplement that mentoring.

Charlie ([21:38](#)):

I'm a big fan of Tim Ferriss and his books and the tribe of mentors is really, really great. If you like that one, make sure you check out Tools of Titans as well. It's a very similar kind of book and I don't know what he did with that paper, but the book is huge and it's so lightweight. It's easy to adjust then you can kind of flip to any part of it. Thank you for that recommendation. I'll make sure I put that in the podcast show notes everybody can check out Tribe of Mentors. As we started to come to a close to your two questions, one is Patty, you've had this green building career you've stayed at one

company for most of your career has been amazing. What career advice do you wish you'd received earlier?

Patty ([22:22](#)):

Don't be afraid to fail is a really important piece of advice. There are so many doors that opened for me because I was willing to throw my hat in the ring, several of which I didn't even think I was remotely qualified for, but clearly at the end of the day I was. Don't be afraid to fail, throw your hat in the ring, see what's out there. That's been summarized many times by many other great speakers in many different ways. I do think it's like a really fundamental piece of advice.

Charlie ([22:55](#)):

That's really good advice. Thank you. Lastly, let's say there's someone listening to this podcast or getting inspired by your story and they're just now jumping into the green building movement. Patty, any words of encouragement for them?

Patty ([23:10](#)):

It's simply saying, don't stop. Keep moving forward. This is a field that can sometimes be discouraging because the world hasn't fully caught up to the importance of this work, but there's a moral imperative behind this work of rebuilding it's for the greater good. And you have to know to take strength from it and keep moving forward. You've got to stop and take your breath. That's cool, but don't give up keep going forward,

Charlie ([23:34](#)):

Going forward. I love it. Moral imperative. Great chat everyone. Please connect with Patty on LinkedIn. We'll put a link there and to the books she recommended and check out Leopardo companies and some of the great buildings that are putting off green buildings, healthy buildings. Patty, thanks for spending time with us today.

I want to say thank you to our loyal listeners. We actually are celebrating over one year here on the Green Building Matters Podcast. Me and the entire team are stoked and so glad you continue to listen every Wednesday morning to a new interview with a green building professional here in this industry, or some pro tips that we want to make sure that you are getting straight from us straight to you. Thank you for listening to this episode of the Green Building Matters Podcasts @gbes.com. Our mission is to advance the green building movement through best in class education and encouragement. Remember, you can go to [gbes.com/podcast](http://gbes.com/podcast) for any notes and links that we mentioned in today's episode. And you can actually see the other episodes that have already been recorded with our amazing guests. Please tell your friends about this podcast, tell your colleagues, and if you really enjoyed it, leave a positive review on iTunes. Thank you so much. And we'll see you in next week's episode.