

Hi, I'm Pam Esshaki and I'm a gladiator. I come from a long line of hard working people. My grandparents were farmers and those hard beginnings created a work culture... and it also gave me a sense of community. My role was to pay it forward in every aspect of my life, whether it was with a greeting, a meeting, my time, compassion for another human being or fighting a good cause. And so from an earlier age on, I knew that I was going to be a lover of people. And it was my job to change things as people crossed my path.

When I was 17 years old, I came into a factory setting and I was the only female out of 3,200 men. The Vietnam War was going on and Women's Lib was approaching. I was just a kid trying to make some money, so I could go off to college and earn a college education. I didn't know that I was to be thrust into the plant, a full blown working environment that did not want a female in the facility at that time. The agreement was that if I had to use the restroom, I would call plant security and they would empty the restroom, and allow me to go to the restroom. But young ladies tend to use restroom more frequently, so after about 3 weeks they stopped showing up and I was working 10 hours a day and I told my dad, I think I can make them build me a bathroom. I learned about the law and he said, "All right, whatever you want to do, I'll help support that". So I petitioned the state of Michigan, and when I had my day in court, the judge told me, there is no longer a need for a restroom in the facility for women because they're not going to hire anymore women in manufacturing. So they gave me a port-a-john. All the guys would jump on top of it to catch me in there. And one evening they tipped it over with me in it and I got three broken ribs, two black eyes had to go to the hospital. I called my father and said I'm at the hospital, and I need you to pick me up, because I have to go back to work. And my dad said, "what do you mean you're in the hospital?" And I said, well, I got hurt at work. And he picked me up and he took one look at me and he said, "I'm not taking you back there. I'm taking you straight back to Lansing. And they're going to see you like that and

they're going to build you a woman's restroom.” So without an appointment, my truck-driving father hauled me into the court and put me in front of the judge and said, “we've been here before. You told her she did need a restroom... this is the result... and now we need to move forward.” And so they built me a restroom here in the plant. So my legacy to the women in the plant, is they can use the restroom because of me.

I know that behind the scenes that most of us are on the right track. And I know that in my in my mind I call all of those people who are willing to be open... we call them 'gladiators'. And I know that there are plenty gladiators walking this planet. It's not always an easy job, but we know how to get the job done. Because gladiators don't give up.