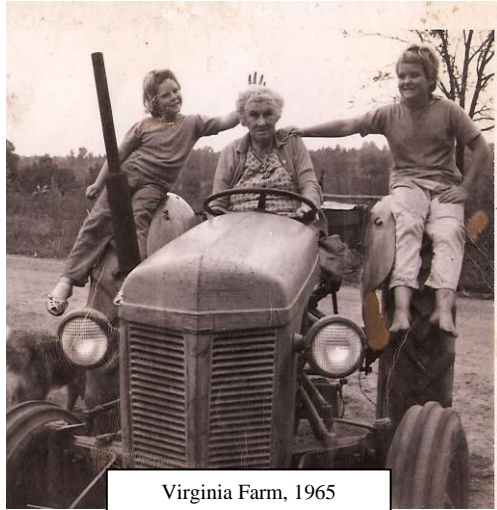


Ms Kimberlee J. Benart



Virginia Farm, 1965

Kimberlee was born in Detroit, Michigan on 31 May 1953. While an infant, her family relocated to southern California where her grandfather, father and uncles started a pre-cast concrete company still in operation today. From a very young age her parents encouraged her love of learning, giving her a chemistry set, a telescope, and books on astronomy, chemistry, and biology. Her mom took her to the library and her dad took her rock hounding and star gazing.

As a child she enjoyed riding her Palomino and swimming. She

excelled in academics, reading two grades ahead, but also wrote poetry, displayed artistic talent, acted in class plays, played volleyball and basketball, took ballet and tap dancing, and enjoyed camping, fishing and boating on family vacations. At the age of 9, her family moved to a small farm in rural central Virginia where her father started a masonry contracting business. Here she raised a young filly and took care of a milk cow and chickens. The family returned to California after one year, but kept the farm in Virginia and returned to it as she entered high school.

As a teenager, she played with her dog and cat, occasionally helped her dad mix mortar and carry brick and block at job sites on weekends, helped lay some of the block in the new family home they built, drove a tractor and cut the fields in summer, helped with gardening, and enjoyed 4-H Club. She was in Beta Club and the National Honor Society; took District-level second place in Spelling; and won "best student" honors in her high school Latin, Science, Biology, Chemistry, Geometry, Algebra, and History classes. She also played basketball and volleyball, acted in class plays, painted and drew caricatures for school fairs, and served as President of the Art Club and Editor of the Yearbook. While a teenager, Kimberlee



High School, 1970

thought she wanted to be an architect but her dad persuaded her she wanted to become a civil engineer. Her high school biology teacher, Mrs Saxon, nominated her for a National Science Foundation program for gifted high school students. She spent the summer prior to her senior year at the University of Delaware, under the guidance of a woman professor in the Civil Engineering Department, testing hyperbolic paraboloid model structures she built from balsa wood. Required to write a paper as part of her summer assignment, she decided to compare the amount of materials required to build various angles of hyperbolic paraboloid roofs, to the surface area the roof covered, to find the most cost efficient angle. To complete the paper after her return to Virginia, she needed a computer. She wrote to the University of Virginia in Charlottesville, an hours drive away. The head of the computer science department allowed her to use his personal account

to complete her computations, and her parents allowed her to make the drive there alone in the old family car. The paper she wrote led to her selection the following year as one of the "Top 40 Winners" in the Westinghouse Science Talent Search, a national competition for high school seniors.

Her summer experience at the University of Delaware had made her eager to leave her rural high school and start college. After an in-person interview with three deans, and with Kimberlee achieving high SAT scores, the University of Florida accepted her without a diploma and she started college in January 1971, halfway through her high school senior year. Her family had no funds for college, but she was able to obtain grants, scholarships, loans, on-campus employment during the school year, and summer employment between academic terms. At UF, she majored in Civil Engineering; was a member of Mensa, Tau Beta Pi (national engineering honorary), the Society of Women Engineers, and the American Society of Civil Engineers. She also served as an investigator in the College of Engineering Honor System. It was in Gainesville that she was introduced to the Baha'i Faith.



Washington DC, 1971

That spring, while at the awards banquet for the Westinghouse Science Talent Search, she sat at the same table as the Director of the National Bureau of Standards. He encouraged her to consider federal employment in her future and invited her to work at NBS that summer as a GS-2 Physical Science Aid. NBS arranged for an employee to host her and take her to work each day. As a result of this experience, she later applied for a federal co-op program with the Navy and spent her summers in between college academic years in the Design Division, Public Works Department, Naval Surface Warfare Weapons Center in Dahlgren, Virginia as a GS-3, 4 and 5 co-op student (civil engineering). In 1973, she transferred back to her home state to complete her bachelor's degree in civil engineering at Virginia Tech.



Peace Corps, 1976

Kimberlee graduated in 1975 with a primary focus in structures and soil mechanics, and minor studies in geology and ground water hydrology. She also passed her Engineer-in-Training examination.

After graduation, Kimberlee turned down an internship with the Federal Highway Administration to enter the Peace Corps, a dream she had held since high school. She served as a Peace Corps Volunteer in the Palau Islands, helping to budget for and construct village water systems, school buildings, and low income housing. While there, she also coordinated construction support with a Navy Seabee Civic Action Team stationed on the island, receiving a letter of appreciation from the Peace Corps after receiving comments from the Seabees on "the fine job" she was doing and her support for the

CAT. She also coached volleyball and played basketball with Palauan girls teams. After returning from the Peace Corps in 1977, Kimberlee was selected for

her first Air Force assignment as a GS-9 Civil Engineer in the Design Section of the Civil Engineer Squadron at Pope AFB, North Carolina. She was also assigned as the additional duty "environmental coordinator" for the installation.

A year later, when environmental planning offices were stood up across the Air Force, her position was realigned as an Environmental Protection Specialist. For the year she spent in this position, she received a Letter of Commendation for the "exceptional effort" that she "put into developing the Environmental Protection Program at Pope", including writing its first spill prevention and countermeasures plan.



AFIT BCE School, 1986



AFIT BCE School, 1989

Kimberlee's next assignment was as a GS-11 General Engineer in Contract Planning/Programming in the Civil Engineer Group at Kadena AB, Okinawa, Japan. While there, Mr Dennis Firman, then Chief of Environmental and Contract Planning, selected her for her first GS-12 supervisory position as Chief of Contract Planning. At Kadena, she was also active in the Federal Women's Program and served as a collateral duty EEO Counselor for the installation. During the four years there, she received a Letter of Commendation for her "development of a multi-year, multi-program Facilities Improvement Program"; a Letter of Commendation for development of "the largest O&M program in recent history" which was cited by the HQ PACAF Civil Engineer as the "type of aggressive programming effort that is needed throughout the command;" and a Letter of Commendation for her efforts as an EEO counselor who "handled a number of unusually complex pre-complaint counseling cases" and made "concerted efforts to resolve cases through informal counseling."

Her next assignment was in 1982 as the Facilities Planning Officer at the Naval Air Station Key West. She had taken the position assuming that programming for a Naval air station should be similar to an Air Force base, and that a small "sleepy hollow" training installation would be a nice change from the previous hectic 4 years at Kadena. However, the Secretary of the Navy decided just then to increase fleet operations in the Caribbean. Shortly after she arrived, Kimberlee was suddenly tasked to program multi-million dollar O&M and MILCON projects for ship support facilities on Key West, quite an adventure for someone who didn't know what "camels, bits, and brows" were or what "going cold iron" meant. In addition to programming, her position did community planning and site approvals, managed the AICUZ program, did environmental planning and permits, completed real estate actions, and managed A-E design contracts. She worked many weekends that year. After she left 13 months later, it took 3 people to replace her.



TAC BCE Conf, 1989

Kimberlee was then promoted to a GS-13 on the Air Staff as an Action Officer in the Housing Division, Engineering and Services Directorate. During her two years on the Air Staff, she processed approvals and congressional notifications for housing O&M projects, housing minor construction projects, and repair or replacement of fire-damaged or destroyed housing facilities. She also managed the Air Force's General Officers Quarters cost reporting system and was editor of the housing programming chapter in the Air Force's new programming regulation.

In 1985, she was selected for her first Deputy BCE position and left the Air Staff for Eielson AFB, Alaska. At that time, she was only the second woman to be selected as a Deputy BCE in the Air Force, the other being just 6 months before.

From that first assignment as a Deputy until her retirement 23 years later, she served 20 years as a Deputy BCE at four different squadrons, on seven different tours, under thirteen different squadron commanders, in both Pacific and European theaters as well as in the CONUS.

While a Deputy, she received numerous performance awards; was a MAJCOM nominee for the Air Force SAME Newman Medal for outstanding engineering management; received letters of appreciation or coins from the Air Force Director

of Logistics and Engineering, Air Force Civil Engineer, MAJCOM Civil Engineer, USAFWC/CC, and Group/Wing CCs for a variety of initiatives and accomplishments, and the NATO Medal for serving at Aviano Air Base during operations in the former Yugoslavia.

She received recognition from the MAJCOM civil engineer for starting quality and productivity initiatives at Mt Home AFB before Quality Air Force was deployed in the command; was selected twice to serve as an Air Force-level examiner for the SecAF Unit Quality Award; and served one year as an Examiner for the U.S. Senate Productivity Awards for Nevada.



Las Vegas, 1995

In 1990-91 she was one of only seven civilians selected to attend Air Command and Staff College in residence where she scored in the top 19% of the class and top 20% on four major examinations, was recognized by her squadron commander for service as Copy Editor of the Yearbook, was noted by the Commandant for her leadership as Team Chief during a major rapid deployment exercise, and won the annual Holiday Door Decorating Contest crafting look-alike paper-doll "Santas" for each of her seminar mates.

She took the reins in one CE squadron as BCE for 5 months when her commander was relieved on short-notice, and in others for 3 to 6 months at a time when her commanders were deployed or detailed away. She was sitting as Deputy at three squadrons when they received Best in MAJCOM, Runner-Up Best in Air Force, or Best in Air Force.

She was project officer for preparation of the Installation Excellence Award for more than half a dozen nominations at three installations, receiving recognition at MAJCOM and Air Force levels, including a \$500,000 award to Aviano AB as AF Runner-Up.



Aviano AB, Italy, 2000

She was speaker at several Women's History month's celebrations, and won the cover artist competition for the 1995 Combined Federal Campaign Brochure in Las

Vegas. She was a member of the Society of American Military Engineers; reached "Competent Toastmaster" status; and was a trained Fire Marshall and On-Scene Commander.

In addition, three years during this period were spent in two assignments outside the CE career field. First, in 2004, Kimberlee was management-reassigned to HQ USAFE/A5 to serve two-years as Chief of the Plans Branch for the Rhein-Main Transition Program. In this position she managed 4 logisticians who tracked actions across all functional areas required to complete the historic closure of Rhein-Main AB and the transfer of its airlift mission to Spangdahlem and Ramstein air bases in Germany. She personally briefed the USAFE Vice Commander and Senior Executive Review Group quarterly on status of the mission drawdown and transfer actions through successful completion of the program. For her efforts, she was awarded the Exemplary Civilian Service Medal.

Second, shortly after returning to Nellis in 2006, Kimberlee was appointed by the ACC Vice Commander to serve as the Agency Tender Official for the 57th Maintenance Group Backshop Maintenance Public-Private Competition under the OMB Circular A-76 program. In this position, she coordinated the preparation and submittal of the Agency's proposal to retain aircraft backshop maintenance as an in-house function performed by civil service employees. This large competition involved almost 900 positions across three squadrons over an 8 year performance period at a cost originally estimated at over half a billion dollars. While the private sector won the competition, Kimberlee's leadership resulted in a cost effective and efficient organizational structure that would have saved taxpayers over \$200 million while ensuring high quality maintenance for high-value aircraft assets.



99th Civil Engineer Squadron, Nellis AFB, 2008

Ms. Benart retires 3 January 2009 with 35.5 years of Federal service. She is married to Mr Peter O. Sagay, a mathematician. They will make their permanent home in Africa. She plans to write, paint, farm, and pursue charitable projects.

The retirement luncheon is being held at the Nellis AFB Officers Club on Thursday, 18 December 2008. The Retirement Official, Senior Executive Mr. Dennis Firman is Director, Air Force Center for Engineering and the Environment. The Master of Ceremonies is Ms Eloisa Hopper, 99 CES Resources Flight Chief and long-time Chief of Environmental Management at Nellis AFB. Vocalist and Reader is Capt Docia Buchanan, 99 MSG Executive Officer.

In addition to her retirement certificate, Ms. Benart will be presented the Civilian Career Service Medal for significant achievements in engineering management, leadership, and mission support over the duration of her career.