

## Division of Data & Analytics (DDA)

**Reshma Saujani** is the founder of “Girls Who Code”, a program dedicated to building the world’s largest pipeline of future female engineers. Their mission is to “close the gender gap in technology and to change the image of what a programmer looks like and does.” This effort has already reached over 450,000 girls through their numerous offerings, and as a result of the pandemic have initiated new services through remote learning. In addition to founding Girls Who Code, Reshma is also an attorney, activist, and the first Indian-American to run for U.S. Congress.



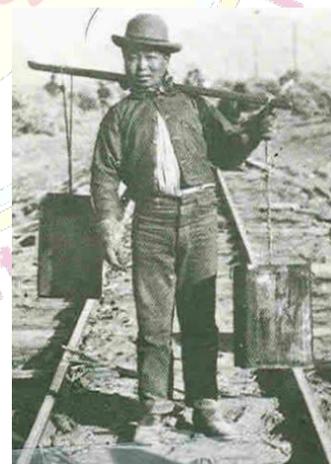
## Division for Technology Implementation (DTI)



**Ajay V. Bhatt** serves as the technical lead for PCI Express within Intel and previously was their Chief Systems Technologist. He is most known for inventing the Universal Serial Bus (USB) technology in 1995 simplifying data transfer and reducing the need for additional peripheral devices and adapters. He also invented the PCI Express serial connection and holds over 130 technology patents. In 2013, he won two awards including the Outstanding Achievement in Science and Technology at The Asian Awards in London and continues to develop solutions to make technology more accessible.

## The Division of Freight, Transit, & Heavy Vehicle Safety (DHVY)

**Chinese American Railroad Workers:** Between 1865 and 1869, 12,000 immigrant laborers from China built the Central Pacific Railroad, which was the western part of the first transcontinental railroad in the United States; they made up 80 percent of the work force on this project. The work was dangerous, and most white workers were not willing to do the work. Although white workers and Chinese American workers were given the same rate of pay, there was a disparity in total compensation, with white workers being provided free room and board, a benefit denied to the Chinese immigrant workers. The railroad provided cross-country freight transportation, and with that, came economic development to the west coast. To build this link in freight transportation, workers laid tracks on land with extreme elevation changes and used explosives to create tunnels through mountains. Workers endured harsh winters, and not all survived. One descendant of the railroad workers, Siu Wong, summed this up with, “We helped build this nation. We have a story that is worthy to be told. It should not be forgotten.” In 2014, 145 years after the



A contribution by the Virginia Tech Transportation Institute’s Road to Inclusion Diversity and Equity (RIDE) Committee.

completion of the railroad, the 12,000 Chinese American railroad workers became the first Asian Americans to be introduced into the U.S. Department of Labor's Hall of Honor.

## Other Notable Accomplishments/Contributions



**Norman Mineta** served as the 14<sup>th</sup> United States Secretary of Transportation and the first Asian American to hold the position. Norman Mineta served as U.S. Secretary of Transportation from January 25, 2001 to July 7, 2006. He was born in 1931 in San Jose, California. As a child during World War II, he and his family were forced to move to a Japanese internment camp. Norman Mineta's career included many firsts: he was the first Japanese-American mayor of a large U.S. city (San Jose); as a congressman in the U.S. House of Representatives, he served as cofounder and first chair of the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus; and under President Bill Clinton, he served as the first Asian American in a presidential cabinet position (U.S. Secretary of Commerce). Under President George W. Bush, Norman Mineta served as the U.S. Secretary of Transportation. Less than 8 months after being appointed, the September 11 terrorist attacks occurred. During the attacks, he ordered all civilian planes to be grounded (first order of its kind in U.S. history). Immediately following the attacks, Norman Mineta directed all U.S. airlines to avoid racial profiling of any kind, based on appearance or origin of passengers. In response to the attacks, he oversaw the creation of the Transportation Security Administration. Norman Mineta was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom. He was a key figure in bringing attention to the need to study truck driving and truck safety within the Department of Transportation. He recently passed, in May 2022.



**Jessica Cox** Filipino-American became the world's first licensed armless pilot in 2008. Cox was born in 1983 with a rare birth condition that caused her to be born without arms. She pilots the plane with her feet. She has said that "Handicaps are mindsets. Whatever it is that stands in the way of achieving something, that's when it's a handicap. I prefer to see them as obstacles or challenges. This is how I've been my whole life. I don't know any different. I just live my life through my feet." She continues to advocate for women in aviation and individuals living with disabilities.

More Information on Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month can be from here: <https://asianpacificheritage.gov/>

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