Let's welcome Eileen Murphy as the Section’s January Spotlight Member! Eileen has been a member of AWWA since 1997. She is employed as an Engineering Practice Lead at American Water and has over 27 years of experience in the water industry. She holds a Bachelor of Science in Chemistry from New York University and a Master of Environmental Engineering from The City College of New York. Eileen also holds Professional Engineer’s Licenses in NY and NJ. At the Section she has been involved in the Education and Professional Development Committee and is currently involved in the Technical Program Committee since 2015.

Why did you decide to go into the field of water?

I didn’t directly choose our industry. I always thought I would work in the medical field because I like to help people. I started my career in water as a water quality supervisor for the NYC Department of Environmental Protection. My primary role was to investigate water quality complaints and provide answers to consumers about their drinking water. I was dealing with the public every day which gave me a sense of purpose and accountability in the workplace. I’ve come a long way from that first job, but I have never lost sight of the service that we provide as the water industry.

How did you become a volunteer for AWWA? What motivates you to be active in the Section?

I was introduced to AWWA while working in New York as a consulting engineer. I attended my first conference in Saratoga Springs, NY in 2003. I joined the NJ Section about ten years later because it was a little closer to home. I quickly learned of opportunities to volunteer in the Section while attending the annual conference. I first joined the Education and Professional Development Committee and met great people like Bill Mitchell and Oleg Kostin. I am currently serving on the Technical Program Committee. We have such dedicated committee members volunteering their own time behind the scenes to ensure the Fall Meeting and Annual Conference are a success. I encourage anyone who attends the annual conference to volunteer in some fashion because it’s the best way to meet our members. The NJ water community is tremendous!

How long have you been an AWWA member and what have you gotten from your membership?

I think I’ve been a member of AWWA since the beginning of my career. Initially, AWWA was a way for me to learn more about the water industry. Fast forward many years later, AWWA is a key technical resource for me. My bookcase is filled with AWWA manuals and textbooks. My favorite AWWA publication is still Opflow. I read it every month. It’s like Highlights magazine for water professionals! I even like the questions in the Certification Corner at the end which can sometimes be very humbling.

Hobbies and outside interests?

I have three children that keep me busy all the time. But when I do have a few minutes to myself, I enjoy cooking, gardening, needle crafts, and listening to music.

What legacy would you like to leave behind?

I am a very independent person and tend to be diplomatic in the way I work with others. I think it is important to let people develop their own approach to whatever the task is at hand. Not only do we learn more this way, but there’s a sense of accomplishment that each task brings. For my legacy, I hope that I can teach friends, family and co-workers that not every step forward will show progress, but every step will absolutely provide experience.