

From the Killing Fields to Silicon Valley Veteran and More

Channy Chhi Laux, author and entrepreneur, Fremont, CA

Channy will describe her journey from the Cambodian Killing Fields to corporate America in Silicon Valley, discussing how the regimen of engineering provides a solid foundation for success. One of many requirements to work in Silicon Valley was knowing different languages, including Assembly, C, then C++—oh yeah, and English! For many who came to the United States as refugees, speaking in computer languages was much easier than English. These new languages leveled the playing field and allowed refugees like Channy a second chance at life by way of a respected career. In the end, Channy explains, it is not only the languages, but the engineering training and discipline that created opportunities for her to venture out on her own with confidence.



Bio: Channy Chhi Laux is a survivor of the Khmer Rouge genocide in Cambodia. In June of 1979, she arrived in Lincoln, Nebraska as a refugee. After four years of no school and without knowing a word of English, she attended Lincoln High School; she went on to earn a Bachelor's degree in Mathematics and Computer Science from UNL, and a Master of Science degree in Applied Mathematics from Santa Clara University. Working as a software engineer with Lockheed Missiles and Space, Rockwell Collins, Northrop Grumman, and BAE Systems, her responsibilities ranged from designing and implementing head up displays (HUD) for fighter jets to designing the Cruise Control System in the Bradley Tank. Channy went on to become Senior Staff System engineer at BD Biosciences, where she led an engineering team to develop and deliver flow cytometer instruments. Channy has served as a president of The INCOSE San Francisco Bay Area Northern California Chapter, where she led the organization to focus on promoting System of Systems design principles, along with Model Based System Engineering (MBSE) methodology. Recently, Channy has taken on a new career path: she published a memoir, *Short Hair Detention*, which tells the story of how she and her family struggled to survive the Cambodian genocide that killed an estimated two million Cambodians. Channy is also the founder and chef of Angkor Cambodian Food, which makes Cambodian condiments, cooking sauces, rare herbs, spices, and more.