Here are some examples of women leaders leaving purposeful legacies in male-dominated sectors, with a focus on their contributions, impact, and the lasting influence they have had on their industries and beyond.

These women have crafted legacies that go beyond their titles or tenure, influencing industries and societal norms. They demonstrate diverse pathways to impact, from advocacy to sustainability to innovation. We hope they inspire you to reflect on your own purpose and potential legacy…

**1. Lynn Good – CEO of Duke Energy**

**Legacy:** Lynn Good is one of the most prominent women in the utilities sector. As CEO of Duke Energy, she has led the company’s transition toward renewable energy and sustainability while maintaining financial stability. Her leadership emphasizes a balance between environmental stewardship and economic viability, leaving a blueprint for how large utility companies can address climate change.

* **Legacy-Building:**
  + Focus on diversity: Under her leadership, Duke Energy implemented programs to increase representation in STEM roles.
  + Future-forward decision-making: Investing heavily in cleaner energy solutions that redefine the future of utilities.

**2. Ursula Burns – Former CEO of Xerox and Senior Advisor to Teneo**

**Legacy:** Ursula Burns broke barriers as the first Black woman to lead a Fortune 500 company. During her tenure, she transformed Xerox from a traditional printer company into a services-driven enterprise.

* **Legacy-Building:**
  + Advocacy for education and diversity: Burns was a vocal supporter of STEM education, particularly for underrepresented minorities and women.
  + Cultural shift: Known for her no-nonsense leadership style, she reshaped Xerox’s culture to be more adaptable and inclusive.
  + Mentorship: She is committed to supporting other women and minorities in their rise to leadership, ensuring her influence extends far beyond her own tenure.

**3. Indra Nooyi – Former CEO of PepsiCo**

**Legacy:** Nooyi is celebrated for her “Performance with Purpose” initiative, which aimed to align PepsiCo’s business success with environmental sustainability and social responsibility. She introduced healthier product lines and set ambitious goals for reducing the company’s carbon footprint.

* **Legacy-Building:**
  + Long-term vision: Nooyi’s emphasis on sustainability continues to influence how major corporations balance profitability and societal impact.
  + Advocacy for work-life balance: Her candid discussions on the challenges of being a working mother in leadership have inspired systemic conversations about gender equity in the workplace.

**4. Ginni Rometty – Former CEO of IBM**

**Legacy:** Ginni Rometty is recognized for leading IBM through its transformation into a cloud and AI-focused business. She championed women in technology and innovation while redefining IBM’s strategy in the digital age.

* **Legacy-Building:**
  + Pioneering inclusion: Rometty spearheaded initiatives to reskill employees for future industries, emphasizing inclusion and adaptability.
  + Corporate responsibility: She introduced IBM’s “P-TECH” program to bridge the skills gap in underserved communities, a model that has been replicated globally.

**5. Rachel Watson – Chair of Clean Energy Council (Australia)**

**Legacy:** Rachel Watson has played a critical role in advancing the renewable energy agenda in Australia, a traditionally male-dominated utilities sector. Her work supports clean energy transitions while advocating for increased diversity in leadership roles.

* **Legacy-Building:**
  + Advocacy: She has mentored and championed women entering the renewable energy space, creating a ripple effect for future leadership.
  + Policy influence: Watson’s role includes shaping energy policies that prioritize sustainability and equitable access.

**6. Mary Barra – CEO of General Motors**

**Legacy:** Mary Barra broke barriers as the first woman to lead a major global automaker. She has led GM's pivot toward electric vehicles (EVs) and autonomous driving, positioning the company as a leader in the future of mobility.

* **Legacy-Building:**
  + Breaking stereotypes: As a woman in the automotive industry, she paved the way for others in similarly male-dominated sectors.
  + Visionary leadership: Barra’s focus on long-term sustainability and innovation has positioned GM as an industry leader.
  + DEI focus: Under her leadership, GM has improved diversity in hiring and leadership positions.

**7. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala – Director-General of the World Trade Organization (WTO)**

**Legacy:** Although not in the utilities sector, Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala has been a trailblazer in global trade, a field with significant gender imbalances. As the first African and first woman to lead the WTO, her leadership prioritizes inclusivity and equitable global trade practices.

* **Legacy-Building:**
  + Advocacy for underrepresented nations: She has worked tirelessly to ensure fair representation for developing economies in global trade.
  + Championing women: Through her work and personal example, she has inspired countless women to pursue leadership in international affairs and economic development.

**8. Elouise Cobell – Environmentalist and Banker**

**Legacy:** Elouise Cobell, a member of the Blackfeet Nation, led a historic lawsuit against the U.S. government for mismanagement of Indigenous lands, resulting in a $3.4 billion settlement.

* **Legacy-Building:**
  + Trailblazer for Indigenous rights: Her fight for justice set a precedent for equitable treatment and accountability.
  + Sustainable practices: Cobell’s work has influenced how natural resources are managed on Indigenous lands.

**Optional Reflection Exercise:**

**“Defining Your Legacy”**

* Think of a woman leader you admire. What aspects of her leadership and legacy resonate with you?
* Write 3-5 elements of a purposeful legacy you want to create in your leadership role.