In this role, Hilger leads the company’s Communications business unit strategy, development, and operations, with an emphasis on advanced military communications, network architectures and support systems that enable network-centric operations for defense and homeland security customers worldwide.

The Communications business unit develops and deploys advanced military communications and support systems including fifth-generation aircraft avionics, airborne gateways and networks, distributed mission live-virtual-constructive training and military satellite communications systems. Core programs include F-35 Communications, Navigation & Identification (CNI) avionics, Battlefield Airborne Communications Node (BACN), Distributed Missions Operations Network (DMON), E-6B strategic airborne command post, and Joint Counter Radio-Controlled Improvised Explosive Device Electronic Warfare (JCREW).

Hilger, who joined the company in 1985, is a seasoned expert in the full-lifecycle development and integration of large-scale systems. During her tenure with Northrop Grumman, she has developed and delivered systems for customers, executed multiple programs and led multi-disciplinary, cross-organizational teams to solve complex programmatic and technical problems.

Hilger also earlier led the Battle Command operating unit, where she was responsible for key programs including the Force XXI Battle Command Brigade and Below (FBCB2) system. FBCB2 – the premier U.S. Army tactical situation awareness and command and control system – operates over disparate communication mechanisms and networks ranging from tactical radios to commercial and military satellite networks. Hilger’s team successfully delivered FBCB2 to support the Army during Operations Enduring and Iraqi Freedom, as well as the next-generation FBCB2 Joint Capabilities Release system and the Blue Force Tracking Global Network Operations Center.

Hilger holds a bachelor’s degree in business management with a leadership specialization from Capella University. She is the recipient of a Northrop Grumman Project Technologist of the Year Award and a Chairman’s Award for Innovation. She also served for nine years as a Technical Fellow, a select group of individuals who represent the highest caliber of Northrop Grumman's scientific, technical and systems engineering talent.

The Mexican American Opportunity Foundation, one of the nation's largest Latino human service organizations, named Hilger a 2016 National Latina of the Year. She received the honor in recognition of her professional achievements and community service, which includes establishing the Adelante Engineering Academy at Northrop Grumman’s San Diego site to build a stronger STEM pipeline for Latinas.

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