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Corale L. Brierley is principal and founder (in 1991) of Brierley Consultancy LLC, which provides technical and business consultation to the mining and chemical industries and government agencies. Previously, she worked as chief of environmental process development for Newmont Mining Corporation (1990–1991), general partner at VistaTech Partnership Ltd. (1988–1999), president of Advanced Mineral Technologies, Inc. (1982–1988), chemical microbiologist at the New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology (1971–1982), and microbiologist with Martin-Marietta Corp. (1968–1969). Her interests are in biotechnology applied to mine production; the treatment and management of metal-bearing aqueous, solid, and radioactive wastes; and market and business development in these technical areas.

Dr. Brierley was elected to the NAE in 1999 for her innovations applying biotechnology to mine production and remediation. She served as NAE Councillor from 2009 to 2014, when she was elected vice president. She has been active on a number of NAE committees, currently chairs the NRC Board on Earth Sciences and Resources, and previously chaired the congressionally mandated NRC Committee on Coal Research, Technology, and Resource Assessments to Inform Energy Policy. Her past NRC committee service also includes the Panel on Technologies for the Mining Industries, Committee on Earth Resources, Committee on Novel Approaches to the Management of Greenhouse Gas Emissions from Energy Systems, Committee on Ground Water Recharge in Surface-Mined Areas, and Committee on Review of the US Geological Survey's Mineral Resources Program (which she chaired).

Dr. Brierley is a member of the Society of Mining Engineers (SME) of the American Institute of Mining, Metallurgical, and Petroleum Engineers (AIME) and has received the AIME James Douglas Gold Medal (2008) for distinguished achievement in nonferrous metallurgy and the SME Milton E. Wadsworth Award (2011) for distinguished contributions advancing understanding of the science and technology of nonferrous chemical metallurgy. She has been a member of the International Advisory Committee for the Biohydrometallurgy Symposia since 1983, and has served on the editorial boards for Elsevier's Hydrometallurgy journal since 1996 and Minerals Engineering journal since June 2014.

She received her BS degree in biology from the New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology in 1968, MS in chemistry from the New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology in 1971, and PhD in environmental sciences from the University of Texas at Dallas in 1982.