

WOMEN OF INFLUENCE: CONSTRUCTION & DESIGN



DESPITE THE CHALLENGES OF 2021, THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY IS RIPE WITH OPPORTUNITY — ESPECIALLY FOR women. A recent study showed that although women are still underrepresented in the construction industry overall, they are making significant progress in becoming leaders. A substantial portion of female executives and construction managers have been in their roles in the last five years, suggesting that companies are more recently promoting women to leadership roles. Furthermore, companies and associations are increasing their efforts to promote women in their organizations and educate young women about the benefits of working in the industry. Plus, the construction industry has managed to avoid the gender pay gap, with women actually making about 1% more than men, in terms of average income.

Although there are obstacles for women to get into construction, women have the potential to solve the industry's labor shortage. With more and more groundbreaking women chipping away at gendered norms and leveling the playing field, the industry is taking bigger steps at becoming a more diverse and inclusive space for future generations. In this section, we profile some of the key women paving the way.

Letter from the Publisher



Welcome to the third edition of our annual section honoring LA’s most influential women in construction and design.

Los Angeles is truly a national leader when it comes to influential women – and the field of construction and design is no exception. There are stellar female industry professionals in the region and we’ve alphabetically listed some of the best of them here, along with highlights about their careers.

According to labor force statistics, the share of women in the construction industry is currently only at about ten percent, so the women who make their way to become standouts in that industry truly are pioneers. There’s obviously a way to go for representation in the building game, but the needle is moving, and the industry offers great opportunities for advancement for women.

Congratulations to the extraordinary, talented group of professionals who made this list and thank you for your contributions to the Los Angeles economy ... and skyline!

Best regards,

Josh Schimmels
Publisher & CEO

CONGRATULATIONS
TO OUR OWN

**Shara
Castillo**

and to all
named among
this year’s
LABJ’s Women
of Influence:
Construction
and Design.



Department of General Services, California
Air Resources Board RIVERSIDE, CALIFORNIA



SUSTAINABILITY IS AT THE
CORE OF OUR WORK. WE ARE
COMMITTED TO ENSURING OUR
PROJECTS PROVIDE HOLISTIC,
MEANINGFUL SOLUTIONS.

ZGF
zgf.com

WOMEN OF INFLUENCE: CONSTRUCTION & DESIGN



JOANN ATIENZA
Assistant Project Manager
Lendlease

Joanne Atienza, an assistant project manager at Lendlease, is one of those talented individuals that is able to make critical decisions with less than perfect information while leading by example.

Last year, she was entrusted with critical high risk projects in trying times of COVID-19 where direct oversight was difficult. Atienza excelled with little management or mentorship under tough conditions. Throughout the pandemic crisis to date she has seamlessly navigated through the changing world of essential construction and constant setbacks from unknown conditions intrinsically part of many infrastructure jobs and has been able to deliver her projects with high accolades from her clients as well as Lendlease management.



SUSAN BARTLEY
Associate Director/Project Manager
Skidmore, Owings & Merrill

Susan Bartley has led the design management of some of the most significant and ground-breaking new civic buildings in the Los Angeles region.

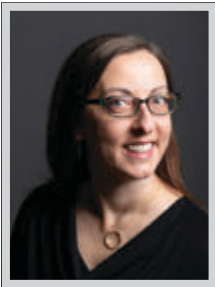
Through her extensive skills and background in both the creative and technical aspects of the architectural design process, Bartley has successfully led multi-disciplinary teams on multiple courthouse, administration, and operational facilities for Federal, State, and City agencies. Among these projects are the headquarters for the Los Angeles Police Department, the California State Courthouse in Long Beach, the regional headquarters for the Royal Canadian Mounted Police in Vancouver, and most recently the new Los Angeles Federal Courthouse in downtown Los Angeles. With Bartley's hands-on project management, the Courthouse set new standards of excellence for the design and construction of future judicial facilities and is a model for new civic architecture. The building is LEED Platinum-certified and has received the AIA's highest awards for design and sustainability.



DR. GIOVANNA BRASFIELD
Vice President of Diversity & Inclusion
Flatiron Construction

In March 2019, Dr. Giovanna Brasfield ("Dr. G") was appointed senior supplier diversity and community inclusion officer for Flatiron Construction as vice president of diversity & inclusion and serves as the highest ranking African-American at Flatiron. In her role at Flatiron, Dr G assists the Southwest District Manager and the Division Manager in meeting contractual requirements on current projects and upcoming project pursuits that engage women, diverse businesses, local workforce, and youth engagement.

Dr. G takes great pride to develop and implement initiatives that will assist Flatiron intentionally increase inclusion both internally and externally. Dr. G also serves as the inclusivity manager for LINXS JV on the Los Angeles World Airport's Automated People Mover project and is an advocate, leader, and change agent within construction who is driven from the inclusion of others within construction and construction-related trades.



DAWN BRISCO
Associate Principal
NAC Architecture

Dawn Brisco is an associate principal with NAC Architecture. She's a member of the American Institute of Architects and is a LEED Accredited Professional through the U.S. Green Building Council. During her 16 years at NAC, she's worked on community-facing projects ranging from adaptive re-use buildings to classroom design and modernization.

Brisco is passionate about sustainable school design that addresses diversity and space equity. She believes all young learners deserve to have a healthy, quality place to learn and grow. Quality learning space to her means listening to the needs of students and families. It also means building an eco-sensitive space that fosters wellbeing. Her designs incorporate sustainable components and the thoughtful application of water conservation and usage. As an advocate for sustainability, Brisco creates environmentally progressive projects with systems that include photovoltaics, reclaimed water, and innovative heating/cooling.



MARIA CARLSON
Chief Financial Officer, Vice President
Pankow Builders

Since joining Pankow in 2005, Maria Carlson has served as corporate controller and as CFO. She directs the company's finance, accounting, tax planning and information technology functions. She is the first female executive/general partner at Pankow and uses her voice and perspective to positively influence the company.

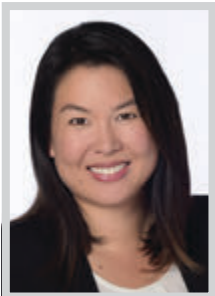
Carlson is also a certified Professional Coach and is instrumental in shaping the leadership development programs at Pankow. Her dedication to support a culture of learning and development at Pankow has been influential in helping the company navigate through the unprecedented times of 2020 and beyond. She led the formation of Pankow's mentorship program, which supports individuals of different specialties with personal growth opportunities. Her leadership in the leadership programs and teaming workshops fuels Pankow's development culture. These efforts are helping to place Pankow on a path toward more inclusion and resiliency through change.



SHARA CASTILLO
Principal
ZGF

For Shara Castillo, knowing the difference between a good decision and a bad one, sticking tightly to a project schedule, and never leaving an assumption unchecked are the cornerstones of her principled leadership style, which she has developed over the past 15 years of working as an architect. With projects across the country, Castillo draws inspiration from many different locales, such as Los Angeles—a melting pot of ideas, cultures, topographies, and architectural styles.

Castillo's most recent accomplishment is leading the ZGF design team through the design competition, design development, and construction of the new 403,306 square foot Southern California Consolidation Project for the California Department of General Services, California Air Resources Board (CARB), which will be one of the largest, most advanced vehicle emissions testing and research facilities in the world. As the lead design principal, Castillo was able to infuse her passion for the sustainability-built environment into the project.



HUNVEY CHEN
Principal, Regional Leader of Healthcare
HOK

As the regional leader of healthcare for the Los Angeles office of HOK, Hunvey Chen is directly responsible for ensuring that projects meet their goals at all levels – visioning, project development, construction and implementation. Hunvey brings to each project her extensive expertise as a project manager and a project architect focusing healthcare design and delivery. Finding her passion for healthcare architecture over 18 years ago, Chen has been part of every major recent healthcare project in the Los Angeles office during her tenure at HOK. Her most recent accomplishment is the renovation of the formerly named Martin Luther King Jr. County Hospital to the Mark Ridley-Thomas Behavioral Health Center.

Other projects in which Chen has been critical are, Kaiser Baldwin Hills-Crenshaw Medical Office Building, Ventura County Medical Center, Scripps Prebys Cardiovascular Institute, Cedars-Sinai Advanced Health Sciences Pavilion and the Saint John's Millennium Project.



VESNA CONROY
Operations Manager
Turner Construction Company

Vesna Conroy is a construction operations manager with more than 20 years of experience in the design and construction industry. Starting her career as an architect in Belgrade, Serbia, Conroy came to Los Angeles in 2003 as a senior project engineer for Turner Construction Company.

Since moving to the Los Angeles area 17 years ago, Conroy has been a driving force working behind the scenes on some of the region's most complex and iconic building projects. She has a demonstrated history of successfully managing complex multi-billion dollar projects such as the Wilshire Grand Center in downtown Los Angeles and currently the SoFi Stadium and entertainment complex – future home of Los Angeles Rams and Chargers. Hospitality construction has been a passion for Vesna. With the ability to strike a balance between construction and architecture, she is a valuable partner for owners and architects alike.

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OLIVIA CREVER
Director of Client Relations
Howard Building Corporation

After a number of years excelling in the hospitality industry, Olivia Crever was offered a business development role at a prominent architecture firm. Nine years later, she has climbed the commercial real estate ladder and is now Director of Client Relations at Howard Building Corporation (HBC). Since joining the team in 2018, Crever has amplified HBC's presence in Southern California by fostering and maintaining relationships with new and existing clients. Her continuous effort in generating new leads, researching growth trends, and working collaboratively with the project management teams has yielded significant results.

Crever's involvement with CoreNet Global and the International Interior Design Association helps bridge the gap between the design and construction management communities, ultimately promoting a more inclusive, coherent industry. The unique circumstances of 2020 further highlighted Crever's creativity and resilience.



JULIE DAVIS
Project Executive
DPR Construction

Julie Davis is a project executive at DPR Construction where she specializes in OSHPD healthcare design and construction, as well as Lean leadership. Davis has more than 25 years of experience managing technically complex projects, mainly acute care hospital renovations and additions, including the only OSHPD1 vertical addition in Southern California. She provides leadership and support to multidisciplinary teams through the planning, design and construction for new projects and remodels.

Since joining DPR in 2011, Davis has established herself as an expert and champion of Integrated Project Delivery and Lean Construction within the company. However, her leadership extends beyond DPR and into the greater industry. From 2018-2020, Davis served as the chair of the Lean Construction Institute Los Angeles/Orange County Community of Practice, a role that enabled her to provide tools and training to industry partners about effective project integration, process transformation and Lean thinking.



JANELLE de la GUARDIA
Project Manager
Nadel Architecture + Planning

Janelle de la Guardia, AIA, has been with Nadel for four years of her 14-year career. In 2019 she received her California architecture license, after previously receiving her license in Texas. She is a LEED Accredited Professional and NCARB certified. In her time with Nadel, de la Guardia has worked as project manager for both renovation and ground-up work. She has worked on a variety of projects which include mixed-use, multi-family residential, hospitality and commercial.

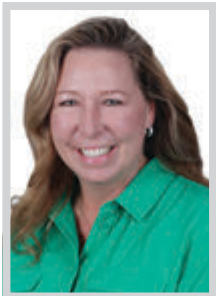
de la Guardia's tasks have involved organizing and preparing teams for new projects; aiding the client in consultant acquisition; producing long-term project schedules while maintaining project budgets; and working with the contractor, client and consultants through the life of the project to achieve a design-oriented product within the client's budget. She is proficient at Revit and has been a key player in aiding her organization in its transition to BIM projects.



CHRISTINA DELGADO
Architect / Project Manager
Hammel, Green and Abrahamson, Inc. (HGA)

Christina Delgado, AIA, LEED AP BD+C, is an architect and project manager with HGA in Los Angeles, where she focuses on designing higher education projects. Her accomplishments include feasibility studies, renovations, and new academic buildings for such clients as California State University Fullerton, California State University Dominguez Hills, San Diego State University, and California Polytechnic State University San Luis Obispo, among other leading academic clients.

With more than 10 years of experience since graduating with a Master of Architecture from Virginia Tech, her skills perfectly align with her current role as project manager directing interdisciplinary team processes during the design and construction process. As a mother with a young child balancing work and family responsibilities, Delgado also provides encouraging advice for women entering the profession. "Our voices are needed," she said. "Women are providing a lot of value and your experience, talent, and insight will take this industry forward."



DENISE DESISTO
Senior Project Manager - Team Leader
Clune Construction

As a second generation woman in construction, Clune Construction's Denise DeSisto is setting new standards of excellence within the construction industry. At a young age, she observed her mother's work as a project accountant with a local general contractor, sparking her passion for the construction process. In 1989 DeSisto began her career in the plan room for a Southern California based construction company and she never looked back. Throughout her career she has worked her way through various roles including estimating, project management, and beyond.

In 2020, DeSisto was promoted to senior project manager and team lead. In this role, she has the overall responsibility and accountability for each project she works on. In addition to her management of the project team, she is also accountable for making sure that the project is staffed properly and that the project cost and schedule is monitored and maintained to the satisfaction of the client.



CHRISTIE FISCHETTI
Principal
CMPG

Christie Fischetti is a strong leader in the construction community. Launching CMPG in 2008 at the beginning of a recession was no small feat. During a time that ended most construction management practices, she not only opened a new company but led her team through the recession and the years to follow with an expanding client list and growing team.

To build a company with great employees and satisfied clients, Fischetti has used her charismatic ability to present information and documentation that is easy and intuitive for employees and clients. This infrastructure allows the CMPG team to provide exceptional services and has created a high company standard for the CMPG brand. With COVID-19, she quickly responded and continued to hold herself and CMPG accountable to achieve excellence even through unprecedented times. She has continued to grow the company, increasing revenue over the last year.



ANNE FLETCHER
Senior Principal, Managing Principal
HOK

Anne Fletcher leads HOK Los Angeles as managing principal, where she is responsible for the strategic direction and overall performance of the multidisciplinary practice. As an architect with over two decades of project management and design experience, she has led teams through significant projects including dozens of mixed-use, hospitality, residential and transportation projects. Anne has a unique ability to guide teams in translating client priorities, expectations and requirements into elegant, efficient and buildable design solutions.

During her tenure as managing principal of HOK's Los Angeles studio, Fletcher has overseen the successful pursuit of numerous projects in the aviation, healthcare, science and technology, and education sectors. The studio's leadership team has been expanded to enhance the studio's expertise and visibility in these critical sectors that contribute to the economic and social health of the Los Angeles region.



JACQUELINE GONZALEZ
Preconstruction Manager
The PENTA Building Group

Smart, persevering and resourceful are all words that perfectly describe Jacky Gonzalez, who currently serves as a preconstruction manager at The PENTA Building Group. At just 34 years old, her multiple educational degrees and nearly a decade's worth of experience in the industry are a few of the many reasons she is a woman to watch in construction.

Gonzalez graduated with a bachelor's degree in Civil Engineering from Cal State LA in 2011 and a master's degree in 2013. She then went on to gain experience in permitting and as a project engineer and senior estimator. Gonzalez joined PENTA in 2018 and recently celebrated two years at the firm as a preconstruction manager. In this role, she is responsible for determining the costs and evaluating all documentation associated with a project. This includes evaluating the construction site, budgeting, researching ways to reduce project costs, and collaborating with various departments to explain cost findings.

WE PAY TRIBUTE TO THE 2021

WOMEN OF INFLUENCE: CONSTRUCTION & DESIGN

INCLUDING OUR VERY OWN
**ALISON KERMODE
&
DENISE DESISTO**

CLUNE
CONSTRUCTION

WOMEN OF INFLUENCE: CONSTRUCTION & DESIGN



KIRSTIN HARPER-SMITH
Project Executive
Shawmut Design and Construction

As project executive at Shawmut Design and Construction, Kirstin Harper-Smith is responsible for the oversight of the office and field team—and in an industry that’s less than 10% female, she has established herself as a leader with the skill and expertise to successfully guide a team. Currently working on projects spanning from a historic building from 1935 to a tight urban site for microunits, Harper-Smith brings expertise in major projects—including high rises—and a collaborative, proactive approach to construction with a solutions-first focus.

With the COVID-19 pandemic, Harper-Smith has understood the importance of showing up even more for both clients and teammates. Ensuring she and her team do everything to keep projects moving forward safely, she has become entrenched in understanding what the effects of COVID are and planning the construction process around restrictions during the preconstruction phase.



SONNET HUI
Vice President and General Manager
Project Management Advisors Inc.

Born and raised in Hong Kong, and having lived in five countries, Sonnet Hui has spent her life at the crossroads of ideas, cultures and global experience, a perspective she brings to her day-to-day work, facilitating discussions and navigating the complexity of high-stakes development projects. As an architect, developer, business strategist and planner, Hui’s professional achievements span brand-defining mixed use, luxury residential, healthcare, hospitality, and entertainment developments throughout Los Angeles and beyond.

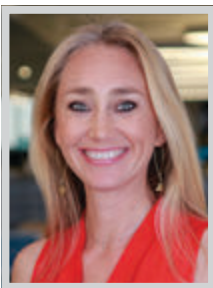
In the immediate aftermath of COVID-19, Hui and her team pulled together to assess every project they were working on and how the dual threats of a pandemic and economic downturn might impact each one. Hui and her team mobilized, which ultimately kept their projects on track as the initial work-from-home period stretched from a few weeks to several months.



LEIGH ANNE JONES
Higher Education Leader, Principal
DLR Group

Throughout her career, Leigh Anne Jones has provided direction and opportunities for women and under-represented populations in the AEC industry. She is an active mentor within DLR Group where she supports several architects who seek guidance and direction at all levels of their career. She has been formally and informally involved with industry leadership and EDI efforts and believes the profession improves with diverse involvement. She also is a regular design critic at Mira Costa College and the Art Center of Design in Pasadena and is on the Architecture Department Advisory Committee at San Bernardino Valley College.

Jones is also committed to making her community a better place to live and the AEC industry a better place to work. She views her leadership role at DLR Group as an opportunity to give back to others and to prepare the next generation of designers who will shape the experiences of building users around the world.



SHAFEE JONES-WILSON
Director of Design Management
AECOM

Shafee Jones-Wilson serves as director of design management in AECOM’s Construction Management Services in Los Angeles. In her 13-year career working internationally with AECOM, her unique and diverse expertise and skillset as a designer, project manager, client representative, contractor, and leader has provided invaluable benefit to both the AECOM company and the construction industry.

In her current position with AECOM’s Construction Management Services, Jones-Wilson has been instrumental in the construction group’s success. On multiple iconic Los Angeles projects with well-known, high profile clients, she has provided invaluable expertise in design management, coordination of bid teams, input into strategy and operations, pursuit leadership, construction oversight, quality and completion processes, client outreach, and community involvement.



EMPOWERING WOMEN
IN CONSTRUCTION

Congratulations to Swinerton’s very own **Kaylee Knudsen** and **Julie Luu** on being named two of *Los Angeles Business Journal’s Women of Influence: Construction and Design*! We are extremely proud of their contributions to our firm, not just as women, but as two of the most dedicated individuals in the construction industry as a whole. As women comprise only 10% of the industry workforce, Swinerton wholeheartedly supports Kaylee and Julie’s goal to inspire women to bridge the gap and empower them to join the industry.



The logo for W.E. O'NEIL is displayed in a white rounded rectangle. The text "W.E." is in white, and "O'NEIL" is in yellow. The background of the entire page is a photograph of a large construction site with multiple yellow cranes and building structures under development.

W.E. O'NEIL

Congratulations

KATIE QUINONES

on being one of the LABJ's Outstanding Women in Construction and Design.

Every day, you inspire and motivate. We are grateful for your leadership, contributions and commitment to others. W.E. O'Neil is proud to have Katie as part of our team, and we look forward to her continued accomplishments.

W.E. O'Neil appreciates the leadership each of these women brings to the construction and design industry.

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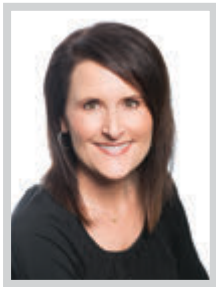
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ALISON KERMODE

Senior Vice President, Marketing & Communications
Clune Construction

Alison Kermode began her career in the construction industry as a marketing manager for a national publishing company that specialized in construction cost estimating books. It was there that her interest in construction began. This experience eventually led her to Clune Construction where she has spent the last 15 years of her career. During her tenure at Clune, the company has grown from a two-office, \$200 million company, to a \$1 billion, 600 employee-owned company with six offices nationwide.

Kermode began her career at Clune developing relationships within the Los Angeles market. She played a key role in making Clune more visible in Los Angeles by attending and sponsoring many industry events. Clune is now one of the area’s most prominent general contractors, and is invited to submit proposals for many of the most high-profile projects in California.



KAYLEE KNUDSEN

Assistant Superintendent
Swinerton

Upon graduating from the USC with a degree in Civil Engineering, Kaylee Knudsen started her career in construction as a project engineer at Swinerton. Over the last six years with the firm, she has worked on many logistically challenging projects with aggressive schedules. These projects have been performed for notable clients in the greater Los Angeles area, including Disney, Apple, NBC Universal, and NASA-Jet Propulsion Laboratory. She has expertise in a wide range of construction types, including high-end tenant improvements; office building renovations; historical renovations; ground-up high-rise buildings; and seismic upgrades and building retrofits.

Kaylee is currently finishing a two-year long phased renovation project at Union Bank Plaza along South Figueroa Street in Downtown Los Angeles. It consists of major interior and exterior renovations for the high-rise office building, including the lobby; office space; two levels of retail and restaurant space; the standalone conference center; and the historical outdoor plaza.

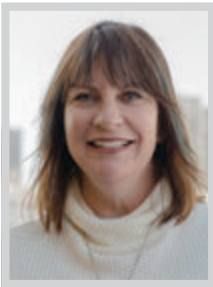


SARAH LANDSBERGER

Project Director
Webcor

The past 18 months of Sarah Landsberger’s professional journey have been nothing short of groundbreaking. In May 2019, she transitioned from the California branch of Lendlease, a construction, real estate and investment group based out of Sydney, Australia, to Webcor, a general contractor with offices throughout California. Since then, she has pioneered a new role as the Southern California region’s first Commercial and Risk Manager and been appointed Project Director on a \$400 million residential tower in downtown Los Angeles.

Landsberger’s unique blend of global experience and recent experience with California construction allowed her to identify a gap in the industry. Her ultimate vision is the appointment of a commercial and risk lead on all Webcor projects. This would guarantee a proactively led approach to accountability for fulfilling a project’s commercial function, including optimizing margin, while also protecting the business from commercial risk.



KARIN LILJEGREN

Owner + Founder
Omgivning

Karin Liljegren, FAIA, IIDA, has dedicated her career to revitalizing the rich stock of existing buildings in Los Angeles. In 1999, she worked on the very first projects under LA’s Adaptive Reuse Ordinance, which launched her nuanced understanding of the challenges and opportunities of adaptive reuse. She is a thought leader in the downtown Los Angeles community and is active with city and county officials in crafting policies that ease the challenges of working on existing buildings. Her impact created the return of historic downtown LA as a livable, walkable neighborhood.

Liljegren was recently inducted into AIA Fellowship, the highest honor for an American Architect. She’s also changed some codes for commercial buildings downtown, like allowing better pool access, and has come out with a post-pandemic design report called “Reimagining Spaces” that can change the outlook of downtown Los Angeles and the city as a whole.



CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL
OF THE WOMEN OF INFLUENCE:
CONSTRUCTION AND DESIGN

“We at Pankow Builders appreciate the leadership Maria brings to the construction industry. Maria represents the next generation leader, she brings strong financial leadership as well as the coaching proficiency to positively influence the learning culture at Pankow.”

- Scott Anderson, CEO of Pankow Builders



MARIA CARLSON
VICE PRESIDENT
CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER



PENTA congratulates our team member

Jacqueline Gonzalez

and all of the 2021 Women of Influence:
Construction and Design honorees

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The PENTA Building Group

WOMEN OF INFLUENCE: CONSTRUCTION & DESIGN



JO-E LOPEZ
Vice President
Snyder Langston

Jo-E Lopez brings 20 years of experience in the architecture and construction industries to her role as vice president and partner for Snyder Langston. In this position she is the second female to achieve executive level at the construction advisor to Fortune 500, mid-size and start-up companies and one of Southern California’s largest and most respected builders since 1959. She oversees market sector strategic planning, marketing, public relations, client relations and business development activities for Snyder Langston, Optym and Snyder Langston Residential.

In her role, Lopez is helping to lead a firm with more than \$400 million annual volume. Lopez has helped to build the Snyder Langston brand, Building with Mastery, elevating the status of the now more than 60-year-old firm. She is also one of three company leaders chosen to carry out the future of the firm as part of its in-depth and strategic succession planning.



JULIE LUU
Apprentice
Swinerton

Julie Luu entered the construction industry in 2018 and immediately fell in love with it. She quickly discovered the vast amount of networking and leadership opportunities it offered. She was inspired and excited by the energy and healthy competition amongst the foremen, journeymen, and apprentices she worked with. They were all hungry to learn and grow—and so was she.

Luu enjoys the intellect, skills, and teamwork needed to complete a project successfully. She aspires to set new trends in the industry as a craftsman and carpenter, all while developing her leadership and mentorship capabilities. She is also proud of her ability to advance her layout skills over the past year while studying at the Union Carpenters Training Facility. One of the most exciting highlights in Luu’s career came during construction at the California Hospital project in Downtown L.A., which is scheduled for completion this year.



CHEYENNE MANGUBAT
Job Captain
Nadel Architecture + Planning

Cheyenne Mangubat is a graduate of the University of Southern California’s five-year undergraduate architecture program. She joined Nadel Architects as an intern while in school and was hired full-time upon graduation. In the past four years, her dedication, creativity and adaptability as allowed her to advance her growth as a young architect. Her most recent achievements include being a key design team member and project manager for several multi-family renovation projects throughout California.

Mangubat enjoys the complexities of designing with existing parameters and finding innovative solutions to these issues. Her detail-oriented and collaborative nature made her an asset to the team. In addition, she is involved in Nadel’s Business Development team and led the redesign of the firm’s office space. She participated as a juror for the Architectural Record’s Advertising Excellence Awards. She was promoted to a job captain role this year and is currently on the path to licensure.



NATALIE PUGA
Project Manager
Del Amo Construction

Natalie Puga is a project manager at Del Amo Construction, with more than 17 years in construction. Prior to her joining the company six years ago, she made her mark as vice president at Titan Integrated Systems. In her time with Del Amo Construction, she has continuously proven to be a top project manager, working on higher education, K-12, and laboratory projects across Southern California. She is known to clients and colleagues as a master of value engineering alternatives and micro and macro schedule analysis.

Puga’s involvement in design-build projects for educational facilities stands out as one of her great career highlights. She was an integral part of the design-build teams for Arts in Action Charter School, the Caltech Bouman Lab, and Rolling Hills United Methodist Church. She helped develop a system to implement both the needs and wishes of the professors, teachers, and administrative staff to utilize the spaces most effectively.

On behalf of the entire team at Turner Construction Company,

**Congratulations to
Vesna Conroy &
Jaimie Turner!**



Vesna Conroy
Operations Manager



Jaimie Turner
Special Projects Division Manager

**Thank you for your dedication to Building the
Future of Los Angeles and your leadership in
advancing the construction industry.**

Turner would also like to congratulate all of the Outstanding Women in Construction and Design. Your leadership, commitment and vision are instrumental in building the future.

Building Momentum

Congratulations to the
8th & Figueroa project team
for starting construction

We're proud to recognize the
Women of our 8th & Figueroa team

Karina Shultz
Joseline Jimenez
Doreen D'Ambrosio
Mackenzie Dias

Joann Atienza
Caleigh Raymer
April James

www.lendlease.com



www.lendlease.com

Congratulations, Joann!

Congratulations to Lendlease's
Joann Atienza, for receiving recognition
in the *Los Angeles Business Journal's*
Women of Influence: Construction
and Design issue.



WOMEN OF INFLUENCE: CONSTRUCTION & DESIGN



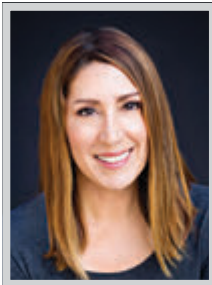
KATIE QUINONES
Senior Estimator
W.E. O’Neil Construction Co. of California

Katie Quinones joined W.E. O’Neil Construction in 2004 as a project administrator for a high-profile casino project. She started with duties that included pay applications, subcontractor invoicing, waiver tracking and processing open account invoices. She quickly showed interest and ability in estimating and in 2006 took on the position of estimating coordinator. Quinones’ hard work ethic, combined with her ability to learn all aspects of construction, has led to her progression to an estimator. Continually expanding her knowledge and leadership, she was recently promoted to senior estimator. She is now responsible for managing her bid team, developing bid strategies, understanding scope issues, and conveying project costs to clients. She bids on new projects (both hard bid and negotiated with an extensive focus on conceptual and preliminary budget estimates and related value engineering studies. Quinones has been instrumental in providing over \$150 million worth of pursuit and construction projects annually.



JENNIFER RIES
Vice President, Senior Medical Planner, Office Director
Hammel, Green and Abrahamson, Inc. (HGA)

Jennifer Ries is a senior medical planner and office director at HGA in Los Angeles, where she specializes in healthcare design. With more than 30 years of experience designing outpatient care centers, academic medical centers, medical campus master plans, and replacement hospitals, she has worked with some of the top healthcare organizations in southern California, providing design insight to create efficient, aesthetically inviting facilities that enables her clients to deliver superior patient care. To help drive change at HGA and within the industry, Ries sits on the firmwide Equity Task Force and Los Angeles office’s Equity Committee to provide guidance on how the firm contributes to a more inclusive culture. “Equity is important to the architecture industry, our clients, and the community at large,” she said. “There are ingrained systems, processes, biases and habits that unintentionally create barriers to reaching the goal of a more equitable industry.”



MICHELE SALAS
Regional Safety Manager
Suffolk

Michele Salas is a regional senior safety manager at Suffolk with 25 years of experience in the construction industry. Each day she works to maintain safety and security for her colleagues and the communities around job sites. She works across Suffolk’s Southern California projects where she has led safe, on-time and cost-efficient completions for many high-profile projects, including Atmosphere Affordable Housing, which received a “Best Projects” award from ENR for excellence in safety. She oversees safety protocols across five projects and works closely with field teams to anticipate potential issues before they arise and find solutions. Being a woman in a traditionally male-dominated industry comes with its share of challenges, but Salas has proudly broken barriers and gender stereotypes by offering fresh perspectives and has worked to guarantee the safety of multiple field teams. She champions other women in the field, from executives to site workers, offering support and recognition.



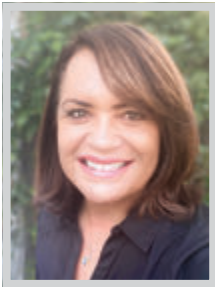
GRACIELA SANTILLAN
Senior Project Manager
Webcor

In 1972, Graciela Santillan’s parents immigrated to Los Angeles from Mexico in hopes of providing their daughters with the opportunities that a country like the United States of America could afford them – opportunities Graciela’s mother, who was pregnant with Graciela’s eldest sister at the time of the move, lacked while growing up in Mexico in the 1950s. Her family created a new life in a series of ethnic Los Angeles neighborhoods where they interacted with other families of similar backgrounds. Despite many challenges, Santillan’s passion for learning and belief that education was the key to success continued to propel her forward. Today, Santillan is a senior project manager, LEED AP and DBIA professional at Webcor. She credits much of her success to a collaboration of initiatives that aim to reduce the financial barriers of low-income minority families, such as the Gates Millennium Scholars program.



Congratulations to our own
Sejal Sonani & Louise Sharp
on being named two of Los Angeles Business Journal’s
Most Outstanding Women in Construction & Design.

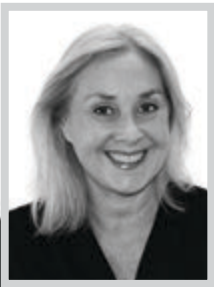
WOMEN OF INFLUENCE: CONSTRUCTION & DESIGN



MEALII SEANOA-SANCHEZ
Regional Safety Manager
AECOM

Mealii Seanoa-Sanchez is the regional safety manager of Southern California for AECOM responsible for development, mentorship, and implementation of safety regulations and policies at six multimillion-dollar projects in the greater Los Angeles area. She started her safety career at UCI Medical Center as a safety specialist. After eight years in the medical field, she made a drastic career change at age 40 into construction.

Over the past 12 years in construction, Seanoa-Sanchez has worked in several construction genres, including Aviation at LAX; Education with LAUSD; Healthcare including Kaiser Permanente, UCI Medical Center and MLK Medical Center; High Rise Residential working with Related, Jamison and Mack Real Estate; Hospitality with Sheraton & Pendry Hotel affiliates; Science & Technology at UCI Medical Center Clinical Lab; and Sports Facilities such as SoFi Stadium and LA Memorial Coliseum. Each genre increasing her value of knowledge with a diverse skill set.



LOUISE SHARP
Principal
HLW

Louise Sharp is a principal at HLW International. She leads the Interior Architectural Design practice for the Santa Monica based LA office of HLW. With over 25 years of experience as an interior architect, Sharp started her career in London. After achieving a 1st Class Hons Degree in Interior Architecture, she joined a London based architectural practice. She worked with clients such as the Victoria & Albert Museum and Trinity College Dublin. She then transitioned to workplace design, delighting in the speed and tactile nature of that sector.

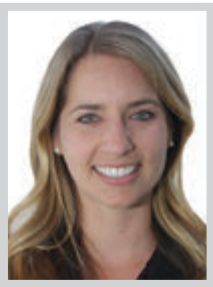
After relocating to New York, Sharp joined HLW as a design director in 2010. During her 10 years with the organization, she has designed over 1.5m sf of creative office spaces. In 2015, she relocated to the HLW Los Angeles office. She continued to build the Interior Architecture group at HLW by diversifying its portfolio and building a culture of collaboration and innovation within the studio.



SEJAL SONANI
Director of Architecture
HLW

Sejal Sonani is a principal at HLW international and a licensed architect. She heads up the architectural design practice for the Santa Monica based LA office of HLW. Her career in architecture started with a Bachelor of Architecture degree in India. In 2003 she travelled to Los Angeles to earn a Master of Architecture degree from USC and continued practicing architecture with several religious, educational, and multifamily residential projects in the city.

Sejal joined HLW international in 2012 as an associate and was made director of architecture in 2015. For the past five years, Sonani has set the design direction for over 1.5 million square feet of creative office projects in Los Angeles area. She has been instrumental in growing the LA architectural studio to a multidisciplinary practice providing architectural, interior design, landscape, and lighting design services. Sejal is the global market sector lead for adaptive re-use, repositioning, and ground up construction of office buildings.



JAIMIE TURNER
Special Projects Division Manager
Turner Construction Company

Jaimie Turner joined Turner Construction Company 10 years ago as a project engineer in the Los Angeles Office. After only two years onsite, she was quickly promoted to business development Engineer where she helped to secure key sales and client relationships in the Southern California region. She progressed quickly through positions of increasing responsibility building the trust of owners, architects, and her teammates. In 2018, she was promoted to senior project manager for Turner SPD where she successfully managed multiple clients and several concurrent projects. The experience and relationships she built in this role positioned Turner SPD for growth in the region.

Upon the success of her work on construction projects in the region, Turner was promoted to division manager of Turner SPD in 2019. As division manager, she is responsible for the overall performance of Turner SPD. Less than a year after taking the position, she helped to triple sales in the region.



Quest
for
Better

Congratulations to our Regional Safety Manager Michele Salas on being named a Women of Influence, and to all the outstanding women in the construction and architecture industries who are leading the way.

Suffolk
Prove impossible wrong



WOMEN OF INFLUENCE: CONSTRUCTION & DESIGN



JILL WITTNEBEL

Co-Managing Director and Principal
Gensler

Jill Wittnebel is co-managing director at design and architecture firm Gensler's Los Angeles office. She was promoted to this role in 2020, after being both a studio director and global leader for the firm's Brand Design practice. She brings to the leadership team incredible business acumen, creative design thinking, a keen ability to connect with people, and mentorship to colleagues. For nearly three decades, she has been a strategic brand designer and has executed campaigns that impact clients across industries from hospitality, retail, financial and professional services, education, real estate and cultural institutions.

Through excellent client relationships, Wittnebel has worked with teams to create unique, memorable brand programs for signature hospitality clients such as Starwood Hotels & Resorts, Caesars Entertainment, Marriott Autograph Collection, and for top companies including Netflix, Credit Suisse, Delta Air Lines, Toys R Us, Estee Lauder, Coca-Cola and Morgan Stanley.

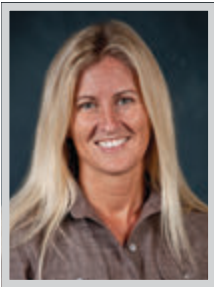


ANNETTE WU

Associate Principal
NAC Architecture

Annette Wu is an associate principal at NAC Architecture. She has over 26 years of experience as an architect, designer, and project manager and has been with NAC for over a decade. Wu is also currently serving her third year on the AIA Los Angeles Women in Architecture Committee as past-chair and recently led the planning for the Powerful VI Conference promoting equity within the profession and celebrating women's design and leadership. To date, Wu has been involved in 50 projects at NAC.

Diversity, equity, and wellbeing are core elements and philosophies of Wu's work. She feels all students should have a motivating and healthy atmosphere to grow and flourish—physically and intellectually. She feels learning space should allow a young person to explore new ideas within a safe and welcoming environment. Sustainability is also a key and base component for Wu.



ERIN YOUNG

Project Executive
Clark Construction Group - CA LP

Throughout her career at Clark, project executive Erin Young has helped spearhead construction efforts on more than \$1.5 billion of work in Southern California. Over the last decade, she has been instrumental in delivering three iconic and award-winning public facilities in Los Angeles County, including the Governor George Deukmejian Courthouse, US Federal Courthouse in Los Angeles, and Long Beach Civic Center. In addition to these projects, her portfolio spans a diverse range of markets, including, education, hospitality, entertainment, and aviation.

Young recently led a high-performing design-build team to deliver the \$414 million Long Beach Civic Center. As project executive, Young was responsible for the successful early delivery of more than 600,000 feet of sustainable structures, including a new city hall and civic chambers, a headquarters for the Port of Long Beach, and a public library, all of which play a critical role in reshaping the downtown area.

Congratulations
to our own
**LEIGH ANNE
JONES**

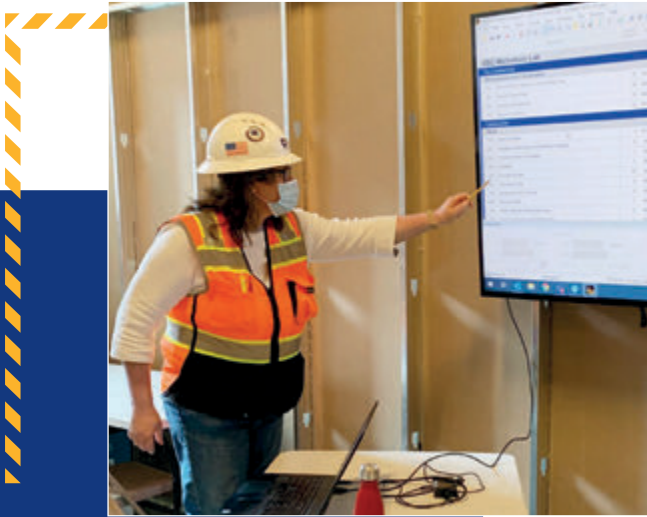
DLR GROUP
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Study Focuses on Need for More Latina Leadership

Senior-level Latina talent is heading for the exits of corporate America at an alarming rate, according to a study released last year by the Network of Executive Women (NEW) and Hispanic marketing platform Latinarrific. At a time when annual Hispanic buying power is approaching \$1.7 trillion, yet there are no Latina CEOs within the Fortune 500 and Latinas represent the fastest growing sector of small business entrepreneurs, the study provides essential insights into the drivers of Latina career advancement and ways in which companies can better identify, promote and retain Latina leaders for a competitive advantage in the marketplace.

“We’re seeing gains in equality through middle management, but there’s still a sparse pipeline of women of color, especially Latinas, for senior leadership positions,” said NEW CEO Sarah Alter. “Once we understand why, we can begin to shift the tide, knowing that diversity and inclusion is not just the right thing to do, it’s an imperative business strategy in today’s multicultural landscape.”

The study, *Latinas in Corporate America – A Foot in Two Worlds: Elevating the Latina Experience*, examined a wide body of research, centering its primary findings on a focus group of 36 senior and mid-level Latina executives. The group included a cross-section of first, second and third-generation Latina-Americans from multiple countries and cultures of origin.

“The report represents the broad experiences that the majority of focus group participants shared,” said study co-author Arminda

Figueroa, Latinarrific Vice President of Strategy and Audience Engagement. “Within any ethnic group is a heterogeneous set of experiences, worldviews and backgrounds, so identified trends cannot be viewed as reflective of every Latina’s journey.”

Many of the Latinas interviewed said they don’t feel they fit easily into the typical corporate culture of the United States. While this could be celebrated from a differences-add-strength perspective, study insights show far too many companies quashing Latina diversity. With the current standard for everything from promotability to executive presence based on white male norms, Latina executives have generally succeeded despite their corporate culture, not because of it.

The Latina executives interviewed rejected the notion that prioritizing family diminishes commitment to career and described themselves as clear and focused in taking on a variety of responsibilities and roles, showing up consistently with integrity and reliably getting the job done. They may do it differently than their traditional white male counterparts, making it home for dinner more often or taking a couple hours to visit their child’s classroom. But that balanced approach is part of the diversity and value Latinas bring to the table.

“Interestingly, many of the traits cited by the focus group as drawbacks within the traditional, white male dominated workplace – making time for family, empathy, expressiveness – have become celebrated assets in the COVID-19 work-from-home landscape,” said

study co-author Karianne Gomez, NEW Vice President of Strategic Value. “What remains to be seen, as the country reopens, is whether a newly enlightened C-suite will embrace the unique attributes Latinas bring to the table, or revert to its old ways, forcing an emboldened Latina talent pool to flee corporate America even faster.”

WHAT COMPANIES CAN DO

The study authors urge corporate leaders to look to Latinas as individuals, so they can build a more robust talent development plan, addressing the isolation and bias participants described.

Recommendations include:

- **Embrace diversity and inclusion as “smart business”**

Study after study show diverse companies outperforming their competitors. Companies with culturally and ethnically diverse executive teams are 33 percent more likely to see better-than-average profits, according to a McKinsey & Company report, and when that diversity extends to a company’s Board of Directors, the competitive advantage increases to 43 percent. Leveraging the thinking of diverse groups leads to smarter ideation and decision-making that reduces a company’s risk of being blindsided by something a diverse team would have flagged.

- **Recognize bias**

Latinas are subject to a range of bias in the workplace, both conscious and unconscious. Focus group participants referenced the

“mañana” stereotype, presuming individuals from Latin cultures put things off until tomorrow rather than addressing them head-on today, and employers’ assumption they are somehow less intelligent because they have an accent. Some described being disparaged not only by native English-speakers, but sometimes by Latin co-workers for their regional dialect. The study authors encourage companies to continue, or enact, unconscious bias training, noting that building the empathy and emotional intelligence of managers helps build better relationships with all employees, but especially multicultural ones.

- **Practice inclusive leadership**

Without inclusion, diversity walks out the door. True cultural competence means understanding and valuing the uniqueness of diverse others, while also accepting them as members of the group. Companies that celebrate differences and identify how those differences are making a positive business impact will win and retain Latina talent.

- **Instill a culture of accountability**

To significantly move the needle, companies need to hold leaders accountable for diversity and more importantly, inclusion. This means putting measures into place that are tied to performance reviews and ultimately executive compensation.

To view or download the complete *Latinas in Corporate America – A Foot in Two Worlds: Elevating the Latina Experience* report, visit newonline.org/latina.

HGA

CONGRATULATIONS TO



CHRISTINA
DELGADO

&

JENNIFER
RIES

On being named to LA Business Journal's
Women of Influence: Construction and Design
We are proud to have you on the HGA team!

THE SKY
IS THE LIMIT.

**CONGRATULATIONS TO
LA BUSINESS JOURNAL'S
WOMEN OF INFLUENCE HONOREES!**

We celebrate all women in the industry for breaking barriers and thinking without limits.

A special shout out to our very own, **Mea Seanoa-Sanchez** and **Shafee Jones-Wilson** who are leading the way in today's construction industry.



Mea
Seanoa-Sanchez



Shafee
Jones-Wilson

AECOM HUNT
AECOM TISHMAN

