



CELEBRATING
55 YEARS

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2019 Women Who Build: Lee Ann Sullivan, Lion's Head Cost Consultants, Inc.

February 15, 2019 - Connecticut

Name: Lee Ann Sullivan

Position: President

Company: Lion's Head Cost Consultants, Inc.

How many years have you been in your current field? 40

What project, transaction, honor or accomplishment are you most proud of? There are many proud moments over my years in the industry, but I would say the most meaningful was leading the effort for the New York Aquarium to gain funding from FEMA after Hurricane Sandy. Speed was essential to keep doors open and maintain animal environments without loss. Our success enabled funding for repairs and allowed continuation of the Ocean Wonders project, and with it a new chapter for the historic and educational Coney Island facility.

What is the best leadership advice you have ever received? Who was it from? The CEO of Turner Construction, Peter Davoren, gave me this simple advice: "Do what you say you're going to do." I think he's right. People trust a leader who always comes through for them.

Which project, deal or transaction was the "game changer" in the advancement of your career during the last 10 years? Starting my consulting company.

What are you doing differently in 2019 that has had a positive impact on your career? Providing services as a consultant in lieu of as employee allows me to meet new clients, manage a team, and expand my business acumen beyond my regular duties as an estimator and preconstruction manager.

What was your first job and what did you learn from it? My first construction job was an internship in the engineering department at Ford Motor Co. Steel Division, Rouge Plant, Dearborn, MI. I spent the summer of 1979 on a line and grade crew that set rolling mill equipment to one thousandth of an inch and monitored construction of a wastewater treatment plant. I learned how to survive in a male-dominated environment: work hard, laugh off sexist remarks, and enjoy the comradery of the team.

Who are three women – living or dead – that you would like to have drinks with and why?

1. Marie Curie, for her brilliant and creative scientific mind;
2. Hillary Clinton, for her strength and political savvy; and
3. Bonnie Raitt, a star in the male-dominated world of pop music.

What were your biggest fears when you started out in your profession? Funny, I was never afraid when I started out in my profession! I remember sore feet, sunburns, and coping with weather extremes, but not fear. Fear came later: afraid I couldn't balance work and children and keep everyone happy, including myself.

What motivated you to step out on your own? The motivator for me was opportunity. I felt consistently under-valued in the construction estimating world, with no opportunity for growth. I decided if no one would promote me, I'd just have to promote myself.

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