



CELEBRATING
55 YEARS

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2019 Women in Construction: Kristen O’Gorman, Architect/Senior Project Designer at SGA

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How many years have you been in your current field? 8

What are you doing differently in 2019 that has had a positive impact on your career? In 2019 I am trying to balance my work/home life better. It’s easy to get caught up in the office, but I have realized it’s so important to make sure that you also have a personal life. I have carved out mornings for the gym, and have decided if I make dinner plans I cannot cancel because of a deadline. And what have I learned? Everything still gets done. And I’m just a little more relaxed getting to the finish line.

What was your first job and what did you learn from it? My first “real” job was scooping ice cream for Haagen Dazs at age 15. It helped me learn about time management and that I’m lactose intolerant. Jokes aside, it wasn’t necessarily my first job I learned the most from—it was the mix of not-so-pleasant jobs I’ve held that I believe built character and showed me how to work hard. From cleaning dressing rooms in a discount clothing store, to ringing out groceries on the overnight shift, I have learned to put my pride aside and get the job done.

Who are three women – living or dead – that you would like to have drinks with and why? It’s very hard to narrow this down, but I’ll try. First and foremost Michelle Obama. She is such an inspiration on how to carry yourself—without taking yourself too seriously. Next up, as a female architect, I must say Zaha Hadid. Though some of our design choices differ, I respect her immensely. Not only for being a female trailblazer in the field—but more so for being a trail blazer across all genders in the field. Last up, Ruth Bader Ginsburg. With her wit and long career in a boys club, I bet she’d have some amazing stories.

What were your biggest fears when you started out in your profession? Being naïve. I have always been an “A” student and a strong athlete; I was not used to being one of the weaker players. However, I knew entering the field I was inexperienced and had a lot to learn. Being the “low-man” on a team was an unfamiliar feeling. College will never give you all of the experience and knowledge needed to excel in this workforce; I felt somewhat unprepared. However, I have had an eclectic mix of jobs in my life, so I knew to: stay humble, ask appropriate question and work hard. I believe it has paid off!

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