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2020 Women Who Build Spotlight: Jean Carroon, Goody Clancy

February 21, 2020 - Connecticut

Jean Carroon, FAIA, LEED Fellow, Principal - Design, Preservation and Sustainability at Goody Clancy

How many years have you been in your current field? 34 years

Which project, deal, or transaction was the “game changer” in the advancement of your career during the last 10 years? It was exactly 10 years ago that John Wiley & Sons published my book “Sustainable Preservation; Greening Existing Buildings.” It is well known in the A/E/C industry by now that 40% of our carbon dioxide emissions come from building construction and operations. The book uses case studies to demonstrate how we can—and must—adapt and reuse our existing buildings in order to curb global warming. I thought the information would become dated, but it continues to be relevant to this day.

What would you tell your daughter about entering this profession? I would tell a daughter, or a son—or anyone embarking on a career in any field—to pursue what you love. If it is working with old buildings, or anything else. Pursue it with joy and conviction—and the right amount of humility.

What are you planning to do differently in 2020 to have a positive impact on your career? I am more mission-driven than I am career-focused. Last year when I served as the President of the Boston Society of Architects, I made my tenure the “year of carbon.” I wish I could say we had stopped our industry’s contribution to global warming right there and then! Unfortunately, we need to work even harder to draw attention to the A/E/C industry’s role in cutting emissions of greenhouse gas. I am optimistic about the increased stewardship I see on academic campuses. Our higher education clients are talking about carbon-positive buildings—an exciting direction for me in 2020.

What was your favorite job and what did you learn from it? When I joined Goody Clancy in 2000, I started working with Trinity Church that first year, and we are still working with them twenty years later. It’s a remarkable building—a beloved Boston landmark, and one of the most important works of architecture in the United States. Our work has ranged from master planning to conservation of stained-glass windows, from the re-invention of the church basement into a community space to the installation of a geothermal exchange system. This project has deepened my understanding of stewardship; Trinity Church will welcome and inspire people for centuries to come.

If your life were made into a movie, what actor would you want to portray you and why? I think Sigourney Weaver would be credible in the role of a preservationist—confronting the unknown, scaling the sides of historic buildings and generally fighting the good fight for the sake of our cultural heritage and our planet! Having an extra nine inches or so will also give movie-me an advantage on job site scaffolding.

New England Real Estate Journal - 17 Accord Park Drive #207, Norwell MA 02061 - (781) 878-4540