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2020 Women Who Build Spotlight: Katherine Dilawari, Haley & Aldrich, Inc.

February 21, 2020 - Connecticut

Katherine Dilawari, PE, LSP, Senior Associate at Haley & Aldrich, Inc.

How many years have you been in your current field? 22 years

Which project, deal, or transaction was the “game changer” in the advancement of your career during the last 10 years? One of my most challenging projects was construction of a building with a 70-ft deep underground parking garage. Approaching the start of construction, we discovered significant groundwater contamination passing through the building footprint. I led planning meetings with the project team to quickly adjust the building design and construction methods to accommodate the contamination. I was uniquely qualified to lead this effort since I had a deep understanding not only of the environmental concerns, but also of the complex geotechnical construction, which included a slurry wall earth support system and top-down construction sequencing. The project started construction on schedule and with costs clearly defined.

What would you tell your daughter about entering this profession? Find a career you are passionate about! Success comes from hard work, which is no fun unless you love what you’re doing. My kids know that mom loves her job. It’s truly rewarding to not only be making the world a better place by cleaning up contamination and enabling the beneficial reuse of brownfields properties, but to also get to collaborate with creative teams who are creating beautiful new neighborhoods! I will also tell my kids to dress for the job you want. It’s much easier to be taken seriously when you’re dressed like the power players in the room.

What are you planning to do differently in 2020 to have a positive impact on your career? I am very focused on external engagement such as technical presentations at conferences and professional societies (Licensed Site Professional Association, Environmental Business Council, etc.) and on active involvement in external professional organizations (for example, I am chair of the LSPA Regulations Committee). This helps to build my personal brand and Haley & Aldrich’s brand, and connects me to clients, potential hires and other resources. I am also very focused on mentoring Haley & Aldrich’s next generation by inviting my younger colleagues to join me at the table for strategic client meetings, external presentations and professional society meetings.

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