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2020 Women Who Build Spotlight: Omarys Vasquez, Svigals + Partners

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Omarys Vasquez, AIA, Associate at Svigals + Partners

How many years have you been in your current field? 15 years

Which project, deal, or transaction was the “game changer” in the advancement of your career during the last 10 years? Working on the new Ronald McDonald House in New Haven, CT has been pivotal in contributing to my passion in designing spaces that enliven, enrich and, especially in this case, to restore and heal a community and keep families together. It was both humbling and rewarding to assist in the managing and design of the home away from home for many families who's children are receiving care at the Yale New Haven Hospital.

If your life were made into a movie, what actor would you want to portray you and why? I feel I should have Salma Hayek portray my character. As a New York City raised latina, I feel her personality mirrors mine. Her energy, strong female roles, and how she represents her culture would be a great fit and reflects my temperament and persona. I am a resilient individual and don't let obstacles stop me. Her spunk, fortitude, and enthusiasm will represent me well.

What was your favorite job and what did you learn from it? The new Ronald McDonald House, as mentioned earlier was not only the project where was pivotal in my advancement, but was also my most memorable job. I had the opportunity to collaborate with clients and the design team, while at the same time managing and motivating the production team. This is where I honed most of my managerial skills, from managing the schedule, the team, and still pushing the design forward. Working on a project for such a great cause will forever leave a lasting impression in me.

What are you planning to do differently in 2020 to have a positive impact on your career? I plan to continue to become an advocate for working parents and for minority architects. As treasurer and a founding member of the soon-to-be-formed NOMA CT chapter, I hope to make an impact by providing mentorship, professional education, and bring more awareness of the architectural profession to minority K-12 students in the region. Using this platform, I hope to contribute in creating more diverse teams within the architectural and design profession. Diversity not only adds more distinct perspectives and experiences, but can enhance our designs by encouraging more innovative solutions.

What would you tell your daughter about entering this profession? Having a 6 month old daughter, I am already teaching her to be independent and resilient. I believe in starting young, and continue the lessons taught by my mother to learn how to stand on your own two feet. Especially in the architecture profession for a woman, it is important to have a voice and your own innovative ideas. I hope she encompasses my same passion to help others and build and design spaces that can have a positive impact on the community. I would encourage her to harness the passion for creative expression.

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