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## **2020 Women in Construction: Melissa Sue Guertin, Project Manager at Shawmut Design & Construction**

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What was your greatest professional achievement or most notable project in the last 12 months? My most notable project is The Langham, Boston which is currently under renovation. The hotel

renovation consists of upgrading 312 guestrooms, including two-floor loft suites and a chairman's suite. The hotel will also have a new Club Lounge on the eighth floor. The team is renovating the public areas of the hotel, as well, including a new ballroom, function rooms, new lobby layout, and a new restaurant in the original Federal Reserve Bank of Boston space. I'm honored to be working on this project that consists of six female team members.

When I'm not working I am...Planning construction events for local women in the industry. I am a director on the board for the National Association for Women in Construction (NAWIC) Boston Chapter. Our events raise funding for scholarships we grant to women currently enrolled in a program or degree related to the industry. Last year we awarded more than \$10,000 in scholarships.

What are you doing differently in 2020 that has had a positive impact on your career? Financial forecasting is a large part of my role as a project manager, but I'm pushing myself to forecast potential issues beyond that. Existing conditions is an unavoidable component to any renovation project, but I am striving to becoming a better project manager by uncovering these potential issues earlier so my team can be prepared with solutions ahead of time.

What trends are you seeing in your field this year? I am continuing to see the trend of a decreased labor force. The industry is booming—especially in Boston—and everyone is on the hunt for more talent. As an industry, we need to show younger generations that construction is a fulfilling and rewarding career. Every year, I host an event called Block Kids Building Competition with NAWIC Education Foundation to raise awareness and encourage children to choose a career in construction. This year, we had more than 30 Girl Scouts from ages 5-10 attend the competition.

Who or what inspired you to join the construction industry? My father is an engineer—his perspective and approach to challenges drew me to the industry. I originally intended to become an architect, but during my studies, I realized how much I enjoyed the building portion of the projects. However, I'm glad I completed my degree in architecture because I can truly appreciate the design process.

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