



CELEBRATING
55 YEARS

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2020 Women in Construction: Kelly O'Brien, Senior Project Manager at Shawmut Design & Construction

March 27, 2020 - Spotlights



What was your greatest professional achievement or most notable project in the last 12 months?
Pomfret School Health and Wellness Building; this was my first design build project. It was fast-track

with a tight budget, but the project came in on time and on budget.

What are you doing differently in 2020 that has had a positive impact on your career? With more than 25 years invested in my career, I have come to appreciate how valuable time is. I've realized that I perform my best when my life is balanced, so I am trying to find better balance with work life in 2020. There aren't enough hours in the day to do it all, so you must build a strong team to ensure tasks are getting completed. It starts with good leadership—setting clear goals, managing priorities, supporting the team, and communicating well. If we all work together, we can make sure we are all finding that balance in our lives and performing our best.

When I'm not working I am...Gardening, golfing, traveling, practicing photography, and spending quality time with family and friends.

What trends are you seeing in your field this year? A demand for talented professionals! Construction is challenging, but this is an exciting and rewarding industry and I hope society and the AEC industries will do more to encourage young people to consider going into the trades and professional services. On a more positive note, another trend I'm seeing is more women in construction—which is great! Each year, I am noticing more and more women on-site or at job meetings.

Who or what inspired you to join the construction industry? For me, the interest in architecture and landscape architecture was always there. As a child, I had dolls and Barbies—but I also had Legos and Lincoln Logs. Three people come to mind when I think back to who inspired me: my uncle, grandfather, and my neighbor. They all had day jobs, but construction was a trade they learned and applied as a hobby throughout their lives. I remember being very intrigued by their projects and snooping around their job sites, tool rooms, and millshops. In hindsight, I wish I took a greater part in learning skills from each of them. However, I still so admire their drive, energy, and talent—it is amazing to think they had the energy to complete all those projects even after a full week of working and commuting.