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2021 Women in Construction: Christina Nicholson, VP of Preconstruction Services, The Congress Companies

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What was your greatest professional achievement or most notable project in the last 12 months?
Getting to where I am today; I started out in the company as a young girl and was able to work in all

facets of the company, from administration, to construction administrator, to assistant project manager, to estimating, to currently, VP of Preconstruction. It's been an extremely valuable learning experience and a wonderful growth opportunity.

What are you most looking forward to post-pandemic? Seeing more projects that have been on hold and/or delayed start up, and of course getting back to as normal as possible. Construction is a great industry, and one that we've seen struggle greatly in the last year from delayed starts and inflation/availability of materials.

How have you adapted and changed in the last 12 months? Our company, like many, have made changes due to the pandemic. It's been quite the transition from working in the office everyday to working from home. Collaboration and communication are a huge part of our industry, and are more difficult without face-to-face contact on a daily basis. This has been the biggest adaption that I personally, and the company have made. We had to bridge the gap until we could reopen our office safely, and we still remain flexible with our staff, many still work at home in varying degrees, to ensure their safety.

What steps have you taken to ensure the continued success of your firm? Adapting to the changing times, construction markets, and types of construction projects. We've directed a lot of our focus and energy into our business development group, to expand our markets and pursue new work that best suits our firm.

Why should women consider a career in construction? Some women have historically stayed away from this industry. However, the stereotypes that led to this are rapidly changing, and pretty much, disappearing. Good firms treat women with the proper and deserved respect in this day and age. The industry is fast paced and you learn something new every day, which is exciting and fulfilling. Every new project brings a new experience and a new challenge.

Starting out in the construction business, who or what empowered you? I started out as a 5-year-old girl, going to work with my father and coloring the blueprints; I could envision the buildings, and I thought it was the greatest thing. Construction was ingrained in me from the start. I watched my grandfather, great uncle, father and brother excel at construction and love what they did/do each and every day.

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