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2021 Women in Construction: Robyn Kiernan, Associate Principal, Project Architect, Phase Zero Design

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What was your greatest professional achievement or most notable project in the last 12 months?
This past year, we were provided the opportunity to work with a non-profit to design their

headquarters. A space which will have a significant impact on the community they serve. We created an inviting space for their employees and clients that allowed for a greater collaborative environment to operate the programs they offer to support the community.

Starting out in the construction business, who or what empowered you? I was fortunate to know at a young age that I wanted to pursue a career in the design and construction industry. In lieu of summer camp as a child, I spent my summers helping my father renovate houses. This provided me with opportunities to see the impact of renovation at a young age. Fast forward to my first job in Boston, I worked at a firm led by a female Director of Architecture. This demonstrated to me that women have a place at the table, even to lead the discussion.

What are you most looking forward to post-pandemic? Interactive face-to-face collaboration with my colleagues. I envision lots of rolls of trace and colorful markers. I want to embrace the 'studio' environment utilizing pin-up space that most of us do not have at home.

What steps have you taken to ensure the continued success of your firm? Phase Zero Design was fortunate to have been diversify our work into new market sectors in recent years. This afforded opportunities even in these uncertain times. Retail has always been the backbone of our firm; however, we have expanded into healthcare and corporate interiors which have provided opportunities to be competitive amongst mixed-use projects. I have taken my retail design experiences, with emphasis on the customer, to the corporate interiors market sector in order to focus on the employee's day-to-day experience.

Why should women consider a career in construction? I am now 15 years into my career, and every week I am presented with new challenges. I am continuously growing as a design professional. The construction industry is so dynamic. New technologies and materials constantly challenge us to learn more, and to enhance the end-user's experience. Every day, and every project, presents new opportunities and creative outlets.

How have you adapted and changed in the last 12 months? The past year has compelled me to be a stronger and more proactive communicator to ensure projects are moving ahead, and that the team is fully engaged.

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