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2022 Women in Construction: Jacquelyn McGurn, Journeyman Carpenter at Ipswich Bay Glass

March 25, 2022 - Spotlights



Jacquelyn McGurn

What was your greatest professional achievement or most notable project in the last 12 months? My greatest professional achievement would be becoming the Sisters in the Brotherhood Chair. Being a part of the SIB is a huge accomplishment for me because I get to help create a safe space for other carpenter women in the Boston area. The women are free to express their feelings and emotions about on/off jobsite concerns. They also get a chance to be heard. Their thoughts and opinions get to be heard in a think tank environment. This space allows like-minded women to come together with comradeship.

Starting out in the construction business, who or what empowered you? What has empowered me in the construction industry would have to be my brother Michael and my father Matthew. I was lucky enough to start my very first union construction job with both of them along my side. I gained tools I would not necessarily gain if it wasn't for my father being there. He trusted and pushed me to do things others would not have. For example, driving a boom lift within my first year as an apprentice. His encouragement allowed me to learn how to confidently operate a 85' boom lift over a river and under a bridge. This catapulted my ego to feel I am capable of anything. While my brother always supported and validated my emotions.

Why should women consider a career in construction? Women should consider a career in construction because in construction there is a job for everyone. Women add a fresh new outlook. Adding new tactics to everyday tasks. We think and move differently than men. We may find new ways to pick up heavy things or even just think outside the box.

Within your firm, who has helped you succeed within the industry? How have they helped you? Friends I met during the carpenters apprenticeship school have helped me succeed in this industry. Without Barbara, Hieu and Michelle I would not be where I am today. They always have my best interest at heart and always kept me moving forward. When you have a great support system such as I then you are capable of anything. Each of us bring something different to the table. We balance out one another's strengths and weaknesses and for that I am grateful.

What tips or advice would you offer to other women who are considering entering the construction industry? Some tips and advice I would offer to other women who are considering joining the union trades is to just go for it. You have nothing to lose and everything to gain. I didn't join the union I wouldn't have met these wonderful people I call family. When considering joining do your research by finding out what trade you would thrive in the most. When people do things they are good at they tend to love it.