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2024 Women in Construction: Debra Seay Associate, Amenta Emma Architects

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Debra Seay
Associate Principal

What was your greatest professional achievement or most notable project in the last 12 months?

In 2022, I was awarded Hartford Business Journal's Top 25 Women in Business Awards. It was such an honor to receive this award and be recognized as a female architectural leader in the Hartford area. My teenage daughter was able to attend the award ceremony with me and it was a wonderful example to show her how hard work and dedication can be recognized.

What has been the driving force behind your success in the AEC industry?

The incorporation of health and wellness within the design of the space is my passion. I became a WELL AP in 2017 and have been passionate about health and wellness ever since. Many designers can create a space that is beautiful and functional, but through thoughtful and creative design approaches like using biophilia, utilizing natural light, views to the outside and natural materials, you can enhance the users experience within the space. It is often said WELL is a nutrition label for your space and if we want employees to want to be in the office, we need to make sure we are providing the appropriate "ingredients" to make it a healthy and safe environment.

Who or what inspired you to join the AEC industry?

I started drawing floor plans when I was in 5th grade. I loved getting a piece of graph paper and creating different floor plans for a house. While I moved away from houses, my love of fitting the puzzle pieces together always remained.

What are your goals for the future?

My next goal is to become a partner. I want my voice and my opinions to have a seat at the table. Not just for my firm but for the industry. Only 14% of partners in architectural firms are women, I want to change that percentage. I want to help make an impact on the employees and give a voice to working women, and mothers.

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