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2025 NEREJ Women in construction - Featured Woman-Owned Business: DiNisco Design

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Donna DiNisco

What's one project or accomplishment that has defined your firm's growth and success? What impact did it have on your team or the community?

DiNisco Design has been designing public schools since 1987, and during the past 25 years educational facilities have become our primary focus. We have been recognized as leaders in assisting communities with meeting their educational needs and enhancing the learning environments for their students. ? Each of our projects is "the defining one." Every client has unique needs and challenges that make their project special. When the school opens and students, staff, and families enter for the first time, there is a sense of pride in knowing that their children are valued. Each project is a meaningful investment to the community, transforming antiquated facilities that impeded students' ability to learn and staff to teach. Our team embraces the positive impact that we make in people's lives, and that is why we come to work every day.

As a leader, what values or principles do you prioritize when guiding your team or making decisions?

There are three core values that we emphasize as a firm: a pursuit of excellence, service to clients and the communities they represent, and loyalty to those we serve and each other. I also value my team's commitment to collaboration, teamwork, and trust, as well as their ability to ask questions, listen well, and reach consensus through open dialogue. Every design solution begins with listening. We listen to what is important to every community we work with, especially the challenges they face. Our role is to create inspiring environments that not only address our clients' needs but also embrace their aspirations. There is no one solution that is applied to every project, which is evident in our work.

How has your firm embraced innovation or adapted to changing trends in the A/E/C industry?

The one constant in the A/E/C industry seems to be innovation and change. We have continued to keep up with the technologies used for design, being cognizant that some innovations are short-lived. Our buildings represent civic pride; therefore, they must be durable and exhibit a timeless quality rather than be trendy. There was a time when sustainability was a lofty goal and now it's become the expected norm across Massachusetts. We continue to push what is possible given the cost constraints our clients are faced with. We've designed many net-zero energy projects, which we anticipate will be the norm looking forward. That is a worthwhile trend I hope will continue its current trajectory.

How do you foster a culture of collaboration and growth within your firm, and what role does diversity play in that?

Our firm's culture is completely based on collaboration and working cooperatively in teams that stay together throughout multiple phases of each project. Team members for each project sit near each other in groupings we call pods to help facilitate communication and discussion. When team members move to their next project, new groups are formed so teams don't become static, and over time everyone has the opportunity to work with everyone else. Team leaders mentor their groups to

encourage growth, and individuals share their experience with each other. We have a diverse group of individuals who are encouraged to be themselves and respect one-another. We have made a conscious effort to not become too large of a firm, ensuring that we maintain the closeness and cohesion we work hard to foster. ?

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