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## **2025 NEREJ Women in construction - Featured Woman-Owned Business: Patriquin Architects**

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Karin Patriquin

What inspired you to start your firm, and how has your vision evolved over the years?

My path to founding this firm was shaped by experiences in various architectural offices – both what to emulate and what to change. I learned from offices with strong design cultures, others with deep technical expertise, and some with remarkable client relationships. These experiences helped me envision a practice that could combine design excellence with a healthy workplace culture and meaningful community engagement. Starting this firm in 2010, we focused on creating an environment where architects could thrive while working on projects that matter – affordable housing that feels like home, schools that inspire learning, and cultural and commercial spaces that unite communities. This vision continues to guide our growth today.

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

Three core principles guide our decisions: community impact, sustainability, and responsible design. Community impact means creating architecture that actively strengthens neighborhoods through extensive stakeholder engagement and spaces that foster connection. Sustainability extends beyond environmental performance to consider building lifecycles, from construction methods to operational costs and future adaptability. Responsible design encompasses economic stewardship, finding creative solutions within budget constraints, and respecting historic contexts when renovating or building in historic districts. These principles serve as practical tools for evaluating opportunities and resolving design challenges while building trust with clients and communities.

What advice would you offer to women who aspire to lead and succeed in the A/E/C industry?

To women aspiring to lead in architecture: Build your technical expertise while developing your unique perspective. Being one of few women in many rooms taught me that our different viewpoints are actually our strength. Find mentors, but also become one. Network authentically by building genuine relationships rather than just professional connections. Don't be afraid to challenge traditional approaches – architecture needs diverse voices and leadership styles. Remember that your experiences, even the challenging ones, can inform designs that better serve diverse communities. Stay committed to your vision while remaining open to learning and growth.

What's been the most rewarding part of your leadership journey, and how have you grown as a leader along the way?

The most rewarding aspect has been watching our projects transform communities while seeing team members grow into leaders themselves. I've learned that leadership isn't about having all the answers, but creating an environment where good ideas can come from anywhere. My journey has taught me that vulnerability can be a strength – being open about challenges and mistakes builds trust and resilience. Seeing our vision of community-centered architecture take root and inspire others in the industry has been incredibly fulfilling. The greatest satisfaction comes from knowing we're helping shape a more inclusive, sustainable architectural future.