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## 2025 NEREJ Women in Construction - Featured Woman-Owned Business: Frank O. Waterman & Associates Inc.

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Jean Waterman

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

In the dynamic and ever-evolving landscape of business, the role of a leader extends far beyond the mere management of tasks and the delegation of responsibilities. True leadership is an art that encompasses the nurturing of interpersonal relationships, the establishment of a cohesive team, and the creation of a work environment where everyone feels valued and respected. As a leader of

a company, I believe in the paramount importance of honesty, integrity, and kindness in every aspect of our work. These core values not only define our organizational culture but also serve as the bedrock upon which we build our success. I firmly believe that honesty, integrity, and kindness are the pillars that support a thriving and successful organization. These values not only guide our actions but also shape our culture and define who we are as a company. By fostering an environment built on trust, ethical standards, and compassion, we can achieve our goals and create a lasting positive impact on our employees, clients, and the wider community.

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

In the traditionally male-dominated construction industry, women face unique challenges that require a particular set of skills and attributes to overcome. Succeeding as a woman in the construction industry requires a combination of resilience, focus, and a willingness to work hard. By developing thick skin, maintaining focus, and embracing the demands of the job, women can overcome challenges, build successful careers, and pave the way for future generations. Respect is also important and is earned through actions, work ethic, and professionalism. A woman in construction who can establish herself as a competent and reliable professional will garner respect from their male counterparts and peers in the industry. The construction industry, like any other, benefits from diversity and inclusivity. As more women bring their unique perspectives and skills to the field, they contribute to a richer, more innovative industry that can meet the demands of the future. These qualities are essential for navigating the complexities of the construction business and achieving long-term success.

What has been one of the biggest challenges you've faced in running your firm, and how did you overcome it?

Running a firm is no small feat, and it comes with a myriad of challenges. Among them, the most daunting challenge I faced was establishing respect for my knowledge of the construction surveying and engineering business. Gaining the trust and confidence of both my peers and subordinates was crucial for the success and smooth operation of the firm. To battle the doubts and establish respect, I decided to take a hands-on approach. I knew that simply stating my qualifications and experience would not be enough. I needed to demonstrate my capabilities in a tangible and impactful way. This led me to the decision to work side by side with the union members in the field.

I donned my hard hat and boots and joined the union members on various construction sites. This was not just a symbolic gesture; I actively participated in the work, from surveying land to overseeing engineering tasks. I was determined to show that I was more than capable of doing the work that I was asking my employees to do. This hands-on approach allowed me to bridge the gap between management and the workforce, creating a sense of camaraderie and mutual respect.

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 part of my leadership journey has been the opportunity to organize, develop, and lead a team of exceptional engineers. Their vast knowledge and experience, combined with their passion and dedication, have been instrumental in our firm's success. By honing their talents and providing them with opportunities to shine, I have not only witnessed their growth but also

derived immense satisfaction from our collective achievements. I have grown as a leader by recognizing that each engineer/employee brings a distinct set of skills and perspectives, I focus on creating an environment where these talents can be honed and refined. Encouraging continuous learning is another key aspect of honing our engineers' talents. We provide opportunities for professional development through workshops, training programs, and industry conferences. This not only keeps our team updated with the latest advancements in technology but also inspires them to think creatively and innovate. The journey continues, and I look forward to many more rewarding experiences as we strive for excellence together.

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