



CELEBRATING
55 YEARS

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2025 Women in Construction: Maureen Rystrom, J. Calnan & Associates

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Maureen Rystrom
Partner | Vice President of Marketing

Who or what has inspired you most in your career, and what advice would you share with the next generation of women entering the A/E/C industry? Without a doubt, Jay Calnan has been the most inspiring figure in my career. From the moment I joined JC&A, I saw firsthand how he embodies the philosophy of “doing well by doing good” — leading with integrity, grit, and an unwavering commitment to people. His belief in empowering those around him has not only shaped our company but has also profoundly influenced my own journey. One of Jay’s most powerful lessons is the importance of stepping into the arena—taking risks, working hard, and staying true to your values. His story of betting on himself, cashing in his 401K, and building JC&A from the ground up with nothing but determination and a vision resonates deeply. He understands that success isn’t just about financial growth or project wins; it’s about the impact we leave on our teams, clients, and communities.

Early in my career at JC&A, I joked with Jay about how industry events felt like “wading through a sea of blue suits and silver hair.” His immediate response was, “So what can we do to help you change it?” That moment was pivotal. It led to the creation of the Professional Ladies Association (PLA!), a platform that empowers women in the A/E/C industry to connect, grow, and lead. His support didn’t just give me a seat at the table – it inspired me to build more seats for others.

For the next generation of women entering this field, my advice is simple: recognize when you have someone like Jay in your orbit and lean into it. Find those leaders who challenge you, champion you, and create opportunities for you to thrive. And when you do, pay it forward – because true leadership isn’t about standing alone at the top, but about bringing others up with you.

What’s your favorite way to recharge or get inspired outside of work? Cheering on my three sons in sports & theater – seeing them shine recharges my soul!