



Executive of the Month: Marcotullio, principal of Frank & Marcotullio Design: “Every interior we create is unique”

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Susan Marcotullio, Frank & Marcotullio Design Associates, Inc.

New York, NY The New York Real Estate Journal recently sat down with Susan Marcotullio, principal, ASID, IIDA, LEED AP, ID + C, of Frank & Marcotullio Design Associates, Inc. (F&M Design) for a question and answer session.

Q: Where did you grow up?

A: Warren, Michigan. 8-1/2 Mile like the movie. A half mile from Detroit during the 60's.

Q: What did you want to be when you grew up?

A: I decided in 8th grade to be an interior designer. The only thing that changed was deciding to pursue commercial work rather than residential.

Q: What pointed you down this career path? Any early connections?

A: My grandmother was an art teacher. My father liked to tinker and fix things in the garage. It was his haven away from his seven kids. I have five brothers, but I was the one learning how to fix things with my dad. He was a perfectionist and so am I.

Q: How did you get started in the business?

A: I sold my car, rented a truck and moved to New York without a job. I worked at a small architecture firm for five years and became an associate. I learned project management and the ability to run several retail projects at a time nationwide.

Analytic Partners, New York Office, 360 Lexington Avenue - New York, NY

Q: What are the many roles you have worked in throughout your career – how has that impacted the way you do business now?

A: I learned how to do all the components of a project from beginning to end. This became critical to the way we run our projects now. I have done surveys to punch lists. There are less problems later if the space has been surveyed properly at the beginning.

Q: What about your daily work interests you? Why this industry?

A: I love to build things. I love to see our design come to reality reflecting all of the client's visions and requirements. I love to organize everything from insides of drawers to companies.

Q: What are some of the most important lessons that you've learned from the people that came before you? Who were some of your role models?

A: You cannot skip steps in this business. You must pay attention to the details. Hard work pays off. My mother and father both have outstanding work ethics.

Q: What was the biggest challenge you faced over the years?

A: When we started in this business it was a man's world. We named our company Frank &

Marcotullio with a light ampersand so that most people would think there was a Frank Marcotullio “the man.” It was like the old show “Remington Steele.” In the end, we have a strong woman-owned business (WBE) that has given us an unbelievable edge.

Q: Tell us a little bit about your partnership.

A: Marjorie Frank and I are the original partners of the firm. We just celebrated our 30-year work anniversary. The fact that we can still be friends outside of work after all of the pressures a business adds I think is quite amazing. We both work equally hard and that creates less stress in a partnership.

Superdry Flagship Store, 718 Broadway – New York, NY

Q: What is your plan for the next year, five years and ten? Anything specific you have set your sights on?

A: Every interior that we create is unique. We do not begin the process with a preconceived idea, rather, we believe in beginning with a blank canvas so that the project truly reflects our clients vision and represents their company. Our plan is always to work on interesting and innovative projects helping our clients to achieve their workplace goals.

Q: What are the main industries you service? Who do you feel would benefit the most from F&M's services?

A: We are corporate designers with clients in a range of industries from financial, entertainment, retail, construction, building lobbies, non-profits, and various service-related businesses. People who benefit best from our services are the busy owner or executive who wants the project run through one trusted advisor so it can be coordinated properly. We like to be a close part of the client's team as the project manager.

Q: What does the future of our industry look like? Any predictions or insights?

A: I feel the design business is fragmented. There are several more consultants involved which can sometimes convolute a project. I think technology will continue to allow us to streamline and create more cost effective solutions.

Q: Looking back on your tenure at F&M Design how has the company changed since you started?

A: Over the course of 30 years you have the opportunity to explore many directions. Early on we recognized that not many design firms operate as we do. We have consciously chosen to remain a boutique firm so that we can always put our best foot forward and remain hands on. We have a proven track record demonstrated by our roster of elite, national clientele that consistently come back to us for their design needs. We believe this is not only a testament to our service, but our consistent commitments to each of our clients to have an owner of our company lead each project.

Q: How about the industry as a whole – what's changed since you started?

A: The biggest change for us was going from manual drafting to AutoCad. Technology changes such as the fax, FedEx, email and mobile phones shortened deadlines drastically.

Q: Going forward, what do you think the most important thing is for F&M Design to do in order to maintain its quality and reputation?

A: We must stick to the principals that we have based our business on. To provide quality work to the best of our ability, while at the same time, expand our horizons to stay in touch with the ever changing world of design through media, materials, and New York City the best inspiration for design.

Q: As a co-founder of F&M Design what makes you the most proud today, tomorrow and looking forward.

A: The fact that we are successful and that we survived 30 years in this challenging business. I am looking forward to more travel in my future and to seeing more incredible architecture around the world.

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