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2017 Women in Building Services: Jane Smith, Spacesmith LLP

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Name: Jane Smith, FAIA, IIDA

Title: Founding Partner

Company Name: Spacesmith LLP

Years in real estate: 30

What real estate associations or organizations are you a member of? AIA, IIDA, WX, Building Congress, CoreNet, Beverly Willis Architecture Foundation, ASID, School of Visual Arts

How have you navigated obstacles to achieve success in your career?

Gender-imposed barriers choke the flow of communication in professional environments, and will do little good. For my architecture practice started in 1987, Spacesmith, countless moments of professional success can be attributed to collaboration with individuals unlike myself, including men. I grew up in Wyoming with a politically conservative father who nevertheless encouraged me to enter the business world and compete—or collaborate—with likeminded men. Allowing this kind of attitude to dominate the workplace will lead to environments of progress and success. For women business owners and entrepreneurs, acknowledging and challenging the barriers, and the often-flawed assumptions that maintain them, help move us toward excellence in all industries.

How do you play your strengths to your advantage in your career?

One of our major strengths as a design firm is our focus on both architecture and business strategy. Much of our firm's stature and growth can be attributed to our projects and our clients where valuing design excellence has been important but so has maintaining a focus on targeted business goals. For example, we worked on a strategic analysis for the state of New York's Savings and Government Efficiency (SAGE) Commission of the state's real estate management practices. Cost savings for the moves over three fiscal years totaled in the tens of millions.

What trends are you seeing so far this year?

A huge trend lately has been activating and making more use of smaller spaces, so that every

square inch of a facility is doing more for the owners and tenants. In American workplace and study spaces, things are changing so quickly. There are new ways that sustainability and occupant health are making us reconsider what kinds of materials are best for us and whether we have windows or stand at our desks. We are also seeing more commercial real estate solutions that are inspired by our homes, to make our workplaces and hotels and schools even more residential and welcoming.

What do you do for fun?

I've enjoyed becoming more active in the upstate city of Hudson, N.Y. In fact, we're opening a second office there!

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