



Constance Racanelli of Racanelli Construction examines her awards, her career strongest influences

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Name: Constance Racanelli

Title: Corporate Counsel

Company/firm: Racanelli Construction Company, Inc.

Years with company/firm: 9

Years in field: 12

Years in real estate industry: 12

Professionally, where were you ten years ago and where are you now?

After passing the bar, I joined a Manhattan law firm where I concentrated in real estate transactions, handling various aspects from financing, leases and sales to acquisitions. There, I was involved in a wide range of projects serving diverse real estate owners and investment groups. When I joined Racanelli in 2003, my role changed from general counsel to corporate counsel. Now, I manage legal transactions for one organization instead of many. Since joining Racanelli, I have been involved in various legal transactions, involving contract review and administration, construction financing, leasing, sales and development projects.

What single event professional or personal has most significantly impacted your career?

The decision to go to law school after receiving my master's in Social Work shaped the career I have today. Also, after earning my law degree and passing the Bar, I made a conscious decision at that time not to enter the family business directly, but to first gain the experience afforded by large law firms. That decision gave me a great foundation to perform my current role and position me for greater opportunities.

What award or recognition has been the most meaningful to you and why?

The recognition I gained following my prominent role in two major Racanelli Construction development projects: The First and First Condominiums, a twelve-unit project in Manhattan and the Deer Park Avenue Villas, a 72-unit project in Deer Park. I handled all legal aspects of both projects, from contracts to sales, working closely with the owners, brokers, financiers and surety. I think the positive feedback I received from the various parties involved across all facets of the projects' development gave me professional recognition of which I am especially proud.

How do you stay ahead of the curve?

First and foremost, continuing education has been a vital component in my career. In addition to keeping up with the required Continuing Legal Education (CLE) credits, I am always seeking out educational seminars that will provide the latest information relating to real estate and construction trends and developments. As a single attorney working in-house rather than as a member of a law firm, it's important I stay informed. Additionally, I seek out different opportunities and take measures

in order to capitalize on them. I have recently formed a minority woman-owned construction company to support women in the construction field.

Who has been the strongest influence on your career and why?

Without question, my family and specifically, my parents have had the greatest influence on my career. Their support when I wanted to do something different and not just follow the course my brothers took made a great difference on how my career developed and how I've been able to succeed in many areas.

What obstacles have you overcome to get where you are today?

It sounds cliché but being the only female executive in a male-operated business does present its challenges. Even when I served in the law firms, I was a woman in a largely male-dominated field. However, I don't think any obstacle can't be overcome with knowledge, skills and evidence of ability. Often, a proven track record will start to eliminate the obstacles one by one.

What advice would you give to a woman just starting a career in your field?

There are two things that come to mind for women entering the field: persistence and continuing education. You can't give up when things become difficult or you face unexpected obstacles. It's important to remain on your own course and persist toward achieving your goals. Secondly, you must consider continuing education as a necessity. Staying current in your industry knowledge will not only enable you to perform at your best, it will also open up doors to new opportunities and further career advancement. And most importantly, be committed to your profession and enjoy what you do.

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