



## **2018 Women in Real Estate and Construction Services: Laura Bennett-Hourigan, AKF**

March 20, 2018 - Spotlights

Name: Laura Bennett-Hourigan, PE

Title: Project Manager/Fire Protection Engineer

Company Name: AKF

Years in your current field: 11

What professional organizations or associations are you a member of? PWC, Society of Fire Protection Engineers, National Fire Protection Association, 2014 and 2017 NYC Fire Protection Systems Technical Code Revision Committee

What was your greatest professional accomplishment in 2017?

Maintaining commitments to my project and workload while pregnant with my second child and being a mother to my first. On top of my normal projectload, pregnancy, and responsibilities as a wife and mother, I was also able to participate in the inaugural year of the Mentorship program committee with the NY chapter of Professional Women in Construction. Additionally, I was invited to participate in the planning committee for AMP, AKF's internal women's group, and I was invited as a Technical Committee member for the 2018 NYC Building Code Revision. Simply saying "I did it" is my greatest professional accomplishment of 2017.

What was your most notable project 2017?

The most notable project that I participated in was the modernization renovation of 1271 6th Ave., with Rockefeller Development Group. Along with a façade upgrade, HVAC upgrade, new emergency power system, the project included the upgrade of the existing fire alarm system and "leaky coax" system. Working with multiple moving parts, an excellent contracting team, and a proactive client made the project an interesting endeavor that I am proud to have been a part of.

If you have had a mentor in your career, who was it and what did they teach you?

I would consider my mother to be the mentor that has taught me the most valuable lessons that I still appreciate and use to this day. I was taught the value of a good work ethic, working smarter not

harder, and to put your head down and drive on. These lessons and more are what made me the person I am today.

What trends are you seeing so far this year in your field?

Cantilevered buildings. As is well known, the New York City landscape is finite, and spare buildable space is rare. As such, developers have turned towards buying “air rights” of adjacent buildings, and cantilevering portions of new buildings out over those buildings. I was honored to be part of the building code revision subcommittee that reviewed the specific building code additions addressing cantilevered buildings, and seeing the industry respond has been fascinating. It has been particularly interesting for me, as the requirements to prove structural fire resistance specifically require the analysis and skills of a licensed fire protection engineer.

When I am not working I am...

Either “playing trains” with my 3 year old son Jack, watching my 4 month old daughter Lily grow, or enjoying an international rugby game with my husband... Sometimes all three at the same time!

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