



2020 Women in RE: Jen Stencel, Magnusson Architecture and Planning

October 20, 2020 - Spotlights

Name: Jen Stencel, AIA

Title: Associate Principal

Company Name: Magnusson Architecture and Planning

List up to three associations or organizations that you are currently a member of: American Institute of Architects (AIA), AIANY Women in Architecture Committee, Women in Housing and Finance (WHF-NY)

What recent project or accomplishment are you most proud of?

We just topped out at The Bedford, which is affordable and supportive housing in the Bronx. It's a milestone that comes right in the middle of the COVID pandemic and it's for a building that will eventually house vulnerable New Yorkers, making them safer for the future. Providing new, healthy homes for people during a crisis like this is something I take a lot of pride in.

How are you networking during the pandemic?

I've been reaching out to my network one-on-one where previously I would have attended events. That said, I'm actually moderating a panel for AIANY's Women in Architecture Committee on November 11th and that's given me a great chance to reach out and connect with colleagues and other experts in affordable housing. The pandemic has shown how critical networks are in a time where general business practices were forced to evolve rapidly to keep up with changes in the market. We've all had to be more nimble.

What conferences, books, blogs, podcasts, or influencers would you recommend to women?

@MadameArchitect for engaging interviews with women who advance the profession;
@knd7 Kimberly Dowdell is one of the leaders asking that we all work together to increase the number of Black registered architects. (Did you know that only 2% of registered architects are Black, and most of them men?); and
@FastCompany to keep a pulse on creative approaches outside of the a/e/c industry.

What is one characteristic that you believe every woman in business should possess?

Give yourself time to figure out your own way of operating in business. You don't have to conform to anyone else's standards as long as you are authentically yourself. People will recognize and respect that confidence. If they don't then it's easier to identify these as people to avoid.

What would you tell your daughter if she was interested in following in your footsteps?

The A/E/C industry has a long way to go in terms of being equitable. But there is hope given the progress some companies have made with their leadership being inclusive. Also, that architecture is a demanding but incredibly rewarding creative profession. I would say that to a son or daughter. Architecture is a demanding profession but it's incredibly rewarding.

What trend(s) will dominate your industry in the next year?

The city is looking for architects to lead the way in reducing carbon emissions. Working together with builders and manufacturers is the only way we'll meet Local Law 97. Sustainable retrofits is becoming a much bigger market. Another topic is how can we measure progress in making our buildings healthier. There is over a decade's worth of research about the impact of housing on health, and with the pandemic we are focusing on design interventions to support the health of residents particularly in the affordable housing market.

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