



2021 Women in Building Services: Yumi Moriwaki, Ronnette Riley Architect

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Name: Yumi Moriwaki, AIA LEED AP BD+C

Title: Design Director

Company Name: Ronnette Riley Architect

Real estate associations or organizations that you are currently a member of: AIA

What led you to your current profession?

As an undergraduate I was very interested in history and philosophy where my research thesis culminated in a study of how the history of commerce and the speed with which business was conducted impacted the urban development of a particular neighborhood in downtown Tokyo. As I considered my options after college, I decided it was much more exciting and real to be able to impact real spaces and places that people lived in and experienced every day than to become a theorist, historian or academic and I decided to pursue architecture in graduate school.

In the past year, what project, transaction or accomplishment are you most proud of?

Seeing through the completion of a FDNY ambulance station and the opening of a doctor's office during COVID, gaining a more macro understanding of how the energy infrastructure and building envelope all tie in together to positively impact how we build and how we live in these buildings we design even on the smallest projects.

What trends will dominate your industry in the coming months?

Wellness, sustainable and accessible practices and flexibility in how we define work spaces.

Who was/is your mentor and how did s/he influence/help you in your career?

My most impactful mentors were not architects or in my field at all – but one was a Spanish nun who moved to Japan as a missionary at the end of WWII and founded schools in Japan. I was inspired by her energy, bringing people and resources to make something happen, and her commitment to forging ahead – starting from collecting scrap metal to founding and becoming the headmistress of a

successful international school.

How do you contribute to your community or profession?

I work closely with all the younger people in my firm and try to keep a dedicated and positive outlook in each project that comes to me.

What books or social media influencers would you recommend to other women?

Recently I have enjoyed looking at Move over Bob, a website dedicated to promoting women in the construction industry, and MadameArchitect.

What did you want to be when you grew up?

As a child I wanted to be a ballerina dancer...until years of plies did not seem so fun. I always did draw a lot, including very childish floor plans of homes. I liked daydreaming and creating worlds where I could see myself moving through these imaginary places.

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