



2022 Women in Construction: Katie Hamel, Aurora Contractors, Inc.

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Name: Katie Hamel

Title: Lead Estimator

Company Name: Aurora Contractors, Inc.

What was your greatest professional achievement or most notable project in the last 12 months?

My greatest professional achievement this year would be my current role as lead estimator on Aurora's largest project to date. As the only female lead estimator at Aurora, this is a huge accomplishment for me. I'm grateful for the opportunity to continue advancing in this industry. Another achievement I'm extremely proud of was my position as lead estimator on Netflix Studios in Brooklyn. I was the liaison between the subcontractors, ownership team, and Netflix throughout the entirety of preconstruction, as well as being accessible throughout construction. This project was the first building of its kind for both Aurora and me.

What advice would you offer to other women getting into the architecture/construction industry?

My biggest piece of advice would be to adapt quickly to your situation. There will be many responsibilities and obligations that you will be expected to manage, and while you may not always be in control, learning how to prepare yourself for anything will be crucial. This was the most difficult thing for me to master when I was just starting out. In any stage of a project, you will face obstacles that you may have never experienced before, but just remember what you're capable of and do not falter. Be confident, stand tall and take charge.

Who within your own firm has helped you succeed within the construction industry?

I started as an assistant estimator the day after graduating from college. Trying my best to get involved with any project I could, my colleague and mentor, Jonathan Groh, recognized my hustle and determination. He assisted me through some of the uncertainty that comes with this position and guided me as I gained my own experience. He is a major contributor to my success, and I'm forever grateful for what he has shared with me. I look forward to the day that I can help another prospective estimator in the ways he has helped me.

Starting out in the architecture/construction business, who empowered you?

My father played a crucial role in determining my career path. I was surrounded by the construction industry growing up because he owned his own carpentry company, where I would spend hours with him, absorbing the knowledge he had to share. He will always be my biggest supporter, pushing me to do what's best, not just what's comfortable. I knew I wanted to be part of this industry from a young age, which is what led me to pursue a degree in Architecture at NYIT. It was undeniable that my path would successfully lead me to where I am today.

Why should women consider a career in architecture/construction?

In a male dominated field, it is pertinent that women make their presence known. The next generation of women need to recognize that even if you are the minority in the room, you have the ability to influence. I am no trailblazer; like the tenacious women who have come before me, but I am someone who will be here to bolster the next generation of strong-willed and determined women.