



International Women's Day

## Kim McDonald, AIA, NCARB

Project Architect, The Architectural Team

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After being captivated watching my parents build their house when I was a kid, I took a drafting class in high school and spent my summers doing architecture workshops at a couple of universities near my hometown. I fell in love with the field

and received my Bachelor of Architecture without ever considering another career path. Following a move to Boston, I began working at The Architectural Team (TAT), a 100-person integrated master planning, architecture, and interior design firm. In my time at TAT, I've been given the opportunity to work on a variety of exciting projects and the firm has supported my professional development including receiving my licensure.

Architecture has a long history of gender bias, but we see positive changes with more AEC firms promoting inclusivity and female representation in leadership roles. That said, recognition often remains elusive in day-to-day meetings with clients or on jobsites. It is not uncommon that questions are directed toward my male colleagues, bypassing my expertise, experience, and capabilities. Being prepared, assertive, and knowledgeable doesn't always guarantee you'll get a voice—even though you deserve it.

On a positive note, there's progress in gender equity among practitioners entering the architecture field. Recent data from the National Architectural Accrediting Board (NAAB) shows that 48 percent of architecture degrees are awarded to women. Yet, there is room for improvement, especially for mid-career female practitioners. The key is that we must not only attract more women to the profession but also provide long-term support throughout their careers.

I think female designers are more receptive to collaboration and are more thoughtful about applying the human experience to a design solution. I enjoy working through a design challenge with other women. This teamwork often leads to a plan that considers not only the design brief and project constraints, but also includes a sensitivity towards how a future user will holistically experience the design. Being able to understand the needs of the end user and keep that top of mind throughout the planning and design process is at the core of successful architectural solutions.