

Derivi Castellanos Architects (DCA) are champions of gender inclusion, with 40% of our architectural staff being women. We at DCA would like to celebrate International Women's Day by sharing an interview with our founder Linda Derivi, one of the first women owners of an architectural firm in California.



Linda Derivi received her Bachelor of Architecture from the College of Environmental Design, from University of California, Berkeley. Linda is passionate about community advocacy work, art, historical sites, design, and landscape architecture. Linda Derivi, a licensed architect, co-founded Derivi Castellanos Architects in 1979. Originally encouraged to pursue architecture by the physical blueprints for the “most luxurious washer-dryer set-up, with mahogany paneling and open louvered mahogany doors” of her parents' family home. Linda is inspired by the Fallingwater building by Frank Lloyd Wright and by renowned UK woman architect Zaha Hadid. Linda is passionate about maintaining the historical fabric of communities. She co-founded the Save Downtown Stockton Foundation (SDSF) and serves as Vice President on the board of trustees for the San Joaquin County Historical County Museum continuing her advocacy work for the community.

In regards to her early experience pursuing her education and licensing, Linda said, “A number of professors were encouraging while others were pretty aggressive and arrogant,”

her first job after architecture school was with “a very kind, brilliant Stockton architect and visionary, who never refused to answer my thirty questions a day.” In Linda’s career, she also served on the American Institute of Architects (AIA) California Council as Director of Design and Practice. Offering awareness regarding climate crisis alleviation architecture, making buildings autonomous, and environmental sustainability. Linda demanded to tackle climate change through a design awards program. Which has finally become integrated, but Linda shares that “in the beginning, it was a big fight.”

Linda has faced her fair share of sexism within the field but refused to be pigeonholed. She says, “What any woman architect can do is not one-dimensional, there is no disparity between what men and women can do in architecture.” She speaks to how the balance for women between work life and family-home life is a challenge that remains, but if you remain determined to your goals you can achieve them. To young women in search of a career/area of study, Linda speaks to how girls, due to various educational and societal factors, “may worry about not being good at math, but it is not the most important part. I had to take calculus at Berkeley but have never used it in practice.”

Linda laughed when admitting how ironic it is that, “When I actually became an architect, I found that working with people and keeping paperwork straight were equally as important as the technical and artistic aspects of architecture.” Linda remains enamored by the ability to “design and create an entity from scratch” given the needs of the client. Linda is also a wife, and mother to two, and enjoys baking in her free time. As we wrapped up the interview Linda Derivi was preparing for her 2:00pm board meeting and recommended to me [Julia Child’s Berry Clafoutis recipe](#), saying it is very easy.

Here are two sources to read more about Women in Architecture:

Recommended by Linda: [9 Architects Share What It’s Like Being a Woman in Architecture](#)

Recommended by Marisol: [Women in Architecture](#)

Happy International Women's Day from Derivi Castellanos Architects.

Interview conducted by and written by Marisol Alexandria Sanchez, Ocean Sun Media, DCA Media Manager.