

# ALMA JAUREGUI

AIA | NCARB | ULI | CREW



*Alma heads up House & Robertson's San Francisco office, and has been instrumental in introducing HRA's signature executive architecture services to a range of clients and collaborators, new and old. Her current work includes a major new office tower in SOMA at the key intersection of 5th and Howard streets, innovative tenant improvement office interiors, and a range of retail and food and beverage projects.*

***"The people  
you work  
with should  
be your daily  
inspiration."***

## YOU ARE YOUR BEST ADVOCATE, BE THE SQUEAKY WHEEL.

### HOW DID YOU DECIDE TO BECOME AN ARCHITECT?

While at El Rancho high school in Pico Rivera, a city in East Los Angeles, I applied for an opportunity to travel to Europe over spring break with my class to visit London and Paris.

As the youngest daughter of immigrant Mexican parents, I had yet to leave the neighborhood I grew up in and I was 15, eager to experience new places. My mother was a big advocate for travel, and she made every effort to make sure I was able to take this trip, even if it was unheard of for me as a young woman to travel unescorted by a parent, it is a testament to her efforts that I became an architect.

The moment I stepped into Sainte-Chapelle in Paris, I was overwhelmed with awe and wonder. I had never felt simultaneously small while sensing an innate connection to the past. The magnitude of the architecture around me was like nothing I had experienced. The historic cities, the cobblestone streets, and especially the grandeur of the cathedrals and churches ignited me.

At 15, under the vast vaulting ceiling and the magnificent array of stained glass of Sainte-Chapelle, I chose to become an architect, dedicating myself to creating built spaces that would inspire and cultivate awe in others.

### CAN YOU TELL US A LITTLE ABOUT YOUR CAREER PATH AND THE POSITIONS YOU HAVE HELD?

After deciding to study architecture, my father said 'Architecture is for men' and noted that he would not pay for me to study or go to school for the career path I had chosen. That was the starting point for me to step up to the challenge and show him, and society, that I am capable and will not make myself small or quiet just to meet someone else's expectations.

***The proportion of men in the new architect population has continued to be larger than that of women. However, it is nearing gender parity, with women now making up 43% of the architect population, a 5 percentage point increase compared to 2018.***

FROM THE EDITOR

<https://www.ncarb.org/nbtn2023/demographics>

# ***"When someone says no, take it as a challenge and not as defeat."***

At the age of 17, I went off to school, Woodbury University where I received a B. Arch after 5 years of studio, late nights, and messy encounters with an Olfa blade. I came out with a renewed enthusiasm for the field, a job offer and over 100k in student debt.

FROM THE EDITOR

**10% of the entire architecture industry is Hispanic/Latino. a +3% change from 2018-2022**

<https://www.ncarb.org/nbtn2023/demographics>

Curiously, after a few years working in the field, I came to realize that while I love the built environment, I didn't have the passion to pick colors or select one massing scheme vs another. What I found was that I loved the details, and how the building's guts and components come together.

That's when I found my true calling, executive architecture, and House & Robertson Architects (HRA), where I am now the managing principal of the San Francisco office.

HRA is dedicated exclusively to providing executive architect services for our various design partners. You could say that we act as the ringleader in all aspects of the design and construction process.

Most people don't know what executive architecture is coming out of school. Design is just one component of what we consider architecture, from coordinating consultants, keeping up with contracts, waterproofing details, and construction administration this is our focus.

At HRA we work to alleviate the design teams' time to pursue other endeavors and give our clients piece of mind that the design will be executed to a high degree of skill.

In the past 8 years that I've been with HRA I've gone from learning revit on the job, working out of a job site trailer for over a year, to running an office in a new city. It has been a whirlwind of an experience where every day I get to interact with and manage staff, clients, and the built environment.

***Women are now seen as equally or more competent as men, finds a 2020 meta-analysis led by Eagly. Results showed that competence stereotypes changed dramatically over time. For example, in one 1946 poll, only 35% of those surveyed thought men and women were equally intelligent, and of those who believed there was a difference, more thought men were the more competent sex. In contrast, in one 2018 poll, 86% believed men and women were equally intelligent, 9% believed women were more intelligent, and only 5% believed men were more intelligent. Further, communal stereotypes viewing women as more compassionate and sensitive than men strengthened over time.***

<https://www.apa.org/topics/women-girls/female-leaders-make-work-better>

FROM THE EDITOR

## HAVE YOU ALWAYS WANTED TO BE IN A LEADERSHIP POSITION?

Being the squeaky wheel, asking for feedback, and asking how I can improve showed me that a good mentor will always push you to be your best self.

After seeing how I skyrocketed in my career, I wanted to assist and inspire others to have the same opportunities. This is what led me to want to be a leader and a mentor.

## HOW HAVE YOU WEATHERED THE CHANGING ECONOMIC CYCLES AND RECESSIONS WITHIN THE INDUSTRY?

I was fortunate to graduate a couple of years after the 2008 recession and did not have to deal with that unfortunate downturn.

However, 2024 does not look like a cakewalk. I've learned that it is key to look at your books a minimum of a year out, keep track of staffing vs projects and phases, and ALWAYS be out there networking and marketing.

## WHO MENTORED YOU ON YOUR PATH TO SUCCESS?

Doug Robertson of HRA. What can I say, he has supported, counseled, and bolstered me these past 8+ years. And now is handing over the keys to the castle in identifying me as one of 3 to move the company into its next generation. I am nothing but grateful. My husband Phil Mandery, my family, (any my father who has come around) and the big guy upstairs.

## IS THERE ANYTHING YOU WOULD HAVE DONE DIFFERENTLY?

Nope

## WHAT DO YOU BELIEVE ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT QUALITIES AN ARCHITECT SHOULD HAVE?

Be knowledgeable.

The people you work with should be your daily inspiration. I've learned that the only way to truly succeed while maintaining fulfillment in a career is to work with a great team. I'm inspired by the environment within the office where we cultivate opportunities to grow and learn from one another.

My goal is to support and encourage my team to strive to get more from their careers. I am proud and inspired by my team whenever they succeed at a task or hit a milestone. It is such a rewarding feeling to be able to assist those around me to succeed.

## WHAT ADVICE DO YOU WHO DO YOU LOOK UP TO AS A LEADER AND WHY?

Doug Robertson of HRA. See the note about Doug above.

## ARE THERE ANY RESOURCES THAT YOU FOUND USEFUL?

- *The Culture Code*, Daniel Coyle
- *Lean In*, Sheryl Sandberg
- *Radical Candor*, Kim Scott

## WANT TO GIVE TO FUTURE LEADERS?

When someone says no, take it as a challenge and not as defeat.

## WHAT DO YOU BELIEVE IS THE RECIPE FOR SUCCESS?

To sound cliché...it takes a village. Build up those around you, when one of you succeed you all succeed.

## TIMELINE

2004  
School Trip to Europe

2010  
Intern, Swift Lee Office

2011  
B.Arch, Woodbury University

2011  
Full Time, Swift Lee Office

2012  
Totum Consulting

2015  
Joined HRA

2019  
Associate Principal, HRA

2022  
Managing Partner, HRA