

STANDARD PRESS RELEASE

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NEF ANNOUNCES ITS 2019-2020 CAROL A KUEKER CONSTRUCTION EDUCATION VISIONARY AWARD WINNER

Stevens Institute of Technology Associate Teaching Professor named

Dateline: Orlando, FL - June 15, 2020 — NEF – NAWIC Education Foundation awarded its 2019-2020 Carol A Kueker Construction Education Visionary Award to Ellyn A Lester, Assoc. AIA, PhD, Stevens Institute of Technology, Hoboken, NJ. Lester was voted as the top candidate by all participating judges this year.

Lester is an Associate Teaching Professor in Construction Management, as well as the Director of the Built Environment Programs and the Associate Chair of Graduate Studies for the Civil, Environmental and Ocean Engineering Department, at Stevens Institute of Technology. At Stevens since 2014, she was hired by a previous Kueker winner, Linda M. Thomas, JD, PhD, to assist in revitalizing the Construction Management program and has been active with construction industry education since 2000. Lester has received a number of awards over her career and is active with various professional societies and memberships.

Lester credits her varied industry experience, highlighted the huge role that *communities of practice* play in propelling important initiatives and driving positive outcomes throughout the entire industry. Today, Lester is recognized by industry and academia as a leader in the *Built Environment*. The term *built environment*, or built world, refers to the human-made environment that provides the setting for human activity, ranging in scale from buildings to cities and beyond. It has been defined as "the human-made space in which people live, work and recreate on a day-to-day basis."

Thomas mentioned in her sponsorship package "there's no one that 'carries the torch' for the construction industry more than Ellyn Lester." She continues, "Her passion and dedication to the entire *Built Environment* was first evident through her consistent involvement in numerous nonprofits early in her career, first as a volunteer in AIA, ABC and others, then to her advancement to the Presidency of SMPS in Kansas City." Lester has a deep-rooted passion for the industry which has led her to help her students build their readiness for industry, then continue to mentor them post-graduation.

Sarah Tully, Project Manager at Lehrer Cumming states “Ellyn has been one of the most influential mentors for me through the course of my career.” Jiemin Li, Student at Stevens Institute of Technology noted “Professor Lester was my Director when I was in Construction Management Program in Stevens Institute of Technology since 2014. She was my career mentor that directed me to the construction field.” Another recommendation comes from Kelly Morton, MA, Career Development Coach – School of Business at University of San Diego. She states “Ellyn is one of those rare managers who naturally serves as an inspiring mentor for everyone around her”.

The Carol A Kueker memorial award recognizes individuals for their passion and dedication to NEF programs and the promotion of construction education through a variety of avenues. The special award is given to select individuals meeting the highest caliber of achievements demonstrated by Kueker. It is named in honor the late Carol A. Kueker, a long-time trustee and volunteer who served as president of NEF. Kueker was instrumental in promoting the core purpose and goals of the organization.

NEF was founded in 1972 by volunteers from the National Association of Women in Construction (NAWIC) who saw a need for quality training programs in the construction industry. Based in Orlando, FL, NEF is responsible for administering a variety of K-12 programs that help education today’s youth to pursue construction careers. In addition, NEF offers a full range of self-study construction industry programs for adults. NEF maintains partnering agreements with various education-related organizations that allow it to expand its offerings of education programs, many of which are offered online. NEF is recognized by the IRS as a 501(c)(3) non-profit foundation to which tax deductible contributions can be made.

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The core purpose of NEF is to educate the construction industry today...and tomorrow. Its goals are to provide quality education programs for the construction industry and to promote the benefits of a career in the industry. For additional information about NEF, including its educational courses, go to www.nef-edu.org, send an email to nawicedu@gmail.com or call (866) 277-2883.