Ellen S. Prantl, AIA, LEED AP BD+C, Spotlighted By Influential Women, Reflects On A Career Of Growth And Empowerment

PHILADELPHIA, PA, UNITED STATES, September 9, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Philadelphia-based Architecture Leader and Educator Brings More Than Three Decades of Experience in Design, Sustainability, Technology and Mentorship to a Lifelong Commitment to Opening Doors for Others

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania – Ellen S. Prantl, AIA, LEED AP BD+C, is reflecting on a distinguished career spanning more than four decades in architecture, planning, education and professional service. Known for her technical expertise, commitment to design excellence and dedication to mentoring others, Ellen has built a professional legacy grounded not only in accomplished architectural practice, but also in perseverance, integrity, lifelong learning and a belief in helping others succeed.

With more than 30 years of experience shaping thoughtful, high-performing built environments, Ellen most recently served as Architecture Lead and Senior Project Architect Planner at Jacobs, where she spent approximately 20 years contributing to complex, multidisciplinary projects. Her career has encompassed architecture, planning, sustainability and Building Information Modeling (BIM), while her LEED AP BD+C credential reflects her longstanding interest in environmentally responsible design.

Following her retirement from full-time practice in April 2025, Ellen has continued doing what has brought her fulfillment throughout much of her career: teaching. Since 2017, she has served as an Associate Professor at Thomas Jefferson University, where she continues to engage with emerging architects and encourage students to become independent learners and confident professionals. Her academic experience also includes adjunct teaching at Temple University and approximately two decades with the Community College of Philadelphia's Design and Construction program, including board service and curriculum development during the 1990s.

For Ellen, architecture has never been simply about buildings. It has been a career of continual learning, problem-solving and personal growth.

A Career Defined by Perseverance
Ellen began her architectural journey in 1980 after coming to the United States to pursue her studies. Having completed her early education through entrance examinations into London

University, she arrived with an openness to possibility and a willingness to determine her own path.

Although she initially told her family she was coming to the United States to become a teacher, Ellen enrolled in architectural school. After two years, she considered switching to education, approaching the dean to request a year in the education department while she decided between becoming an architect and becoming a teacher.

The dean refused to sign the papers.

Instead, he told her that she was going to become an architect.

Looking back, Ellen considers that decision some of the best career advice she ever received. Architecture ultimately allowed her to pursue both passions. She could practice architecture while also teaching, combining professional experience with her desire to educate and empower others.

That combination would become one of the defining characteristics of her career.

Navigating a Changing Industry

Ellen entered architecture during a period when women faced significant barriers in the profession. Throughout her career, she was frequently the only woman in an office or on a construction site. Rather than allowing those circumstances to discourage her, she learned to advocate for herself, stand firmly behind her work and navigate difficult environments without compromising her values.

Her career also coincided with major technological changes in architecture. Ellen worked with CAD technology during its earliest stages and helped establish a CAD committee with the local AIA to contribute to the development of industry standards. Her willingness to embrace emerging technology demonstrated a forward-thinking approach that would continue throughout her professional life.

She also encountered inequitable workplace practices and limited opportunities for advancement, including experiences related to gender discrimination. At one point, she was told that becoming pregnant was unprofessional and encountered workplace policies that failed to accommodate childcare responsibilities.

Rather than allowing those experiences to define her, Ellen used them as motivation to continue growing and creating opportunities for herself and others.

Integrity Over Competition

When asked what she attributes her success to, Ellen points to two qualities: stubbornness and integrity.

For Ellen, being stubborn does not mean being difficult. It means refusing to give up on her principles and standing up for her rights without becoming rude, vindictive or destructive.

Throughout her career, she deliberately rejected the competitive behavior that can sometimes lead women to undermine one another. Even when other women attempted to put her down or throw her under the bus, Ellen chose to help them advance their careers.

Her philosophy is straightforward: maintaining a clear conscience matters more than winning every professional battle.

Ellen believes women should support one another rather than compete destructively. She has consistently tried to open doors for others, even when she was unable to open those same doors for herself. For her, creating opportunities for others represents a more meaningful achievement than advancing her own career alone.

Growth as a Measure of Success
Ellen's definition of professional success has never centered exclusively on money or titles. Personal growth has always mattered more.

Throughout her career, she has willingly changed jobs even when doing so meant earning less because she believed the new opportunity would allow her to learn and develop further. To Ellen, financial compensation is only one measure of a career. Growth, curiosity and the opportunity to expand one's capabilities are far more important.

She believes that people must continue learning throughout their lives. Without growth, she says, people stagnate.

That philosophy remains central to her work as an educator. Teaching allows Ellen to continue learning by interacting with younger generations, hearing new perspectives and remaining curious about changes taking place in the profession and the world around her.

A Message to the Next Generation
For young women entering architecture and related fields, Ellen's advice is rooted in the lessons of her own career: learn as much as possible, advocate for yourself and never compromise your integrity.

She encourages young professionals to recognize that learning is a lifelong process. Technical knowledge matters, but so do curiosity, adaptability and the willingness to embrace challenges.

She also emphasizes the importance of standing up for one's rights without becoming unnecessarily confrontational. Women can be firm, confident and assertive without becoming rude or vengeful.

Above all, Ellen encourages young women to support one another.

Rather than participating in environments where women attempt to undermine each other, she believes professionals should help their colleagues succeed. Even when someone else is difficult or unfair, maintaining one's integrity ultimately matters more.

"Their conscience is the best thing they can work with," is the philosophy behind Ellen's approach to professional life.

Continuing a Legacy Through Education
Today, Ellen's influence extends beyond the projects she helped shape. Through teaching and mentorship, she continues to invest in the future of architecture.

Her academic work reflects a central belief that students should not simply be taught how to complete assignments or follow established processes. They should be equipped to think independently, solve problems and develop the confidence to navigate their careers.

After more than four decades in architecture, Ellen's career demonstrates that professional success can be measured in many ways. It can be found in the buildings and projects completed, the technologies embraced, the challenges overcome and the knowledge shared.

But for Ellen, perhaps the most meaningful measure is the impact made on other people.

Her career is a testament to the value of perseverance without bitterness, ambition without sacrificing integrity and leadership through service. As she continues teaching, learning and maintaining meaningful connections with family, friends and colleagues, Ellen remains committed to curiosity, personal development and helping others find their own path forward.

For the next generation of architects, her message is both practical and enduring: keep learning, stand up for yourself, support others and never stop growing.

Learn More about Ellen S. Prantl:

Through her Influential Women profile, https://influentialwomen.com/connect/ellen-prantl

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