

Claudia Cabas does not shy away from a challenge.

Cabas, who has a background in architecture, began interning with 1st Oklahoma Construction in May 2013 while she was pursuing her master's degree in construction management at the University of Oklahoma. All the while, the mother of two continued teaching Spanish as an adjunct professor at the University of Central Oklahoma.

She previously taught Spanish for two years at the University of Oklahoma.

A female in the male-dominated construction industry, Cabas quickly worked her way up 1st Oklahoma Construction to become construction manager in 2014.

"Claudia has outperformed every male that I've had in this position to the point that I no longer have to worry about my builds being completed on time, on budget, and with my high quality standards," said Ali Farzaneh, president and CEO of 1st Oklahoma Construction. "Hiring a woman for this position appeared risky at first. However, Claudia's leadership skills have resulted in rather independent burly men complying with her wishes."

Lisa Holliday, assistant professor at the University of Oklahoma's College of Architecture, applauds Cabas' success in a male-dominated industry.

"I would argue construction is the final frontier for women, and Claudia dove head-first into this profession," Holliday

said. "Women like Claudia will make it easier for the next generation of women. Claudia performs in this profession with a great deal of integrity and devotion to her career."

Earlier in her career, Cabas played a significant role in the assessment of and recovery from the magnitude-5.9 earthquake in Colombia on Jan. 25, 1999.

"It was one of the most devastating events to have occurred in my country of birth," said Cabas, who helped gather damage assessments for buildings as a licensed architect for the Ministry of Economic Development.

Throughout the years, volunteerism has remained an important part of Cabas' life. She volunteers at a medical clinic that offers free care to the less fortunate by translating for the Spanish-speaking patients. In addition, she teaches Spanish at Kids Ink and John Ross Elementary School in Edmond.

"My personal philosophy is to learn and relearn so that I can more effectively help others," Cabas said. "My focus is to help children reach their full potential and instill a love of learning that will enable children to become lifelong productive citizens."

Cabas also holds a master's degree in international cooperation and management from the University Externado of Colombia's School of Finance.

She is married to Eduard Ricaurte, a research physician for the U.S. Department of Transportation and Federal Aviation Administration. They live in Edmond with their daughters, Valentina and Victoria.

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1st Oklahoma Construction,
Construction Manager



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