

February 2023

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**ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT**

***"The whole concept of community -- leaning into your community, utilizing your community, being a part of your community -- that was a big part of my life at Macalester."***

Since graduating from Macalester with an Urban Studies major, Zoe Kardasis Sturtz '96 has found a passion for remodeling hundred year-old homes in Saint Paul and Minneapolis. She and her husband own a residential remodeling company in the Twin Cities called Edit Design Build Studio. Since the early 2000s, they had always talked about starting their own business, and being laid off within six months of each other during the recession was the final push they needed.

"Neither of us were ever really brave enough to [start], but when you get thrown into the deep end of the ocean, you get resourceful. We just decided it was time to put one foot in front of the other and we started very small," Zoe says. Though she recognizes it's been scary at times, their company has grown significantly over the last 13 years. Owning the business allows them to do the parts of architecture they love, including project management and design.

Zoe credits the community and connections she's built for cultivating her as a business-owner. She sought roundtables and programs from SCORE, a Twin Cities organization that offers free small business development resources. Through another organization, Women Entrepreneurs of Minnesota, she found a mentor who provided a role model for what an older, successful woman in business could look like. Zoe's advice? "I would encourage young people to find someone who's more experienced and hang out with them!" Zoe now gives back to the community by acting as a mentor herself to young people in her industry.

The Macalester connection has been present for Zoe since the very beginning of her career. She was able to secure her first job out of college by connecting with a Macalester alumni who worked at the Minnesota Bar Association. "That was one of those relationship pieces that happens when you're in a small community that wants to help out others. That was really formative, and it made a difference," Zoe reflected.

You can learn more about Edit Design Build Studio by visiting their [website](#) or emailing them at [studio@editdesignbuild.com](mailto:studio@editdesignbuild.com).

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