

The Daily Transcript

Established 1882 www.sdtranscript.com

Wednesday, February 27, 2019

Melissa Krause



With the same determination and winning spirit she demonstrated as a small forward on the Northern State University women's basketball team in Aberdeen, S.D, Krause is scoring points in a much different arena, running the entitlement planning department of Latitude 33 Planning & Engineering.

"We really assist all different types of our clients in navigating the policies and the world of trying to entitle land in California," said Krause, who aspired to be a history professor before entering the real estate development industry about two decades ago. "It's really strategic thinking, project management and navigating the politics, so you're constantly meeting with the decision-makers in the city and really understanding code and ordinance, and how to get around the more complicated things."

Now with Latitude 33 for about four years, Krause was made a principal in the firm last year. Success was never a slam dunk, but instead the product of her tenacity and perseverance.

"It's a very male-dominated industry and that's never scared me," Krause said. "I've never felt held back by that. I've always been one to focus on 'OK, well... I'm gonna work hard. I'm going to keep my head up and get to where I think I should be.'"

Late last year, Krause celebrated the approval of the Merge 56 project, a very large mixed-use project in the city of San Diego, off State Route 56.

"That was five-plus years in the making," she said. "It just was such a high-profile, complex, politically driven project, and we were able to maintain a very positive public outreach, which, when dealing with the community groups, can often become very difficult and contentious.

"We were able to solve a lot of site-planning issues. It was a huge win for the city and a huge win for our project."

Whether on the basketball court or in the process of policy planning, Krause is no stranger to winning.

- Tony Lovitt

same article as printed in The Daily Transcript February 2019 Supplement issue

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