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# An Introduction to the Interior Design Profession

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We spend over 90 percent of our day in interior spaces. Despite this, most people take interiors for granted, barely noticing the furniture, colors, textures, and other elements—let alone the form of the space—of which they are made. Sometimes, of course, the design of the interior does catch our attention. Maybe it's the pulsing excitement of a casino, the rich paneling of an expensive restaurant, or the soothing background of a religious facility.

As you are reading this book, you obviously have an interest in interiors and interior design. It might be because you have always enjoyed rearranging the furniture in your home. Maybe you like to draw imaginative floor plans for houses. It could be that a relative or friend is a contractor and you have been involved in the actual construction of a building in some way. Perhaps you saw a program on television and it inspired you to learn more about the profession.

The interior design profession is a lot more than what you see portrayed on various television programs. The profession of interior design has been defined by educators and professionals. This widely accepted definition is provided to help you understand what the profession is all about:

Interior design is a multi-faceted profession in which creative and technical solutions are applied within a structure to achieve a built interior environment. These solutions are functional, enhance the quality of life and culture of the occupants, and are aesthetically attractive. Designs are created in response to and coordinated with the building shell, and acknowledge the physical location and social context of the project. Designs must adhere to code and regulatory requirements and encourage the principles of environmental sustainability. The interior design process follows a systematic and coordinated methodology, including research, analysis and integration of knowledge into the creative process, whereby the needs and resources of the client are satisfied to produce an interior space that fulfills the project goals.<sup>1</sup>

Professional interior designers are not interior decorators and interior decorators are not professional interior designers, although the public generally does not see any difference. “Interior design is *not* the same as decoration. Decoration is the furnishing or adorning a space with fashionable or beautiful things. Decoration, although a valuable and important element of an interior, is not solely concerned with human interaction or human behavior. Interior design is *all* about human behavior and human interaction.”<sup>2</sup>

Although a professional interior designer might provide interior decoration services, an interior decorator does not have the education and experience to perform the many other services of a professional interior designer. A decorator is primarily concerned with the aesthetic embellishment of the interior and rarely has the expertise, for example, to produce the necessary drawings for the construction of nonload-bearing walls and certain mechanical systems that are routinely produced by a professional interior designer.

## What Do Interior Designers Do?

Interior design professionals provide the owners of homes and many kinds of businesses with functionally successful and aesthetically attractive interior spaces. An interior designer might specialize in working with private residences or with commercial interiors such as hotels, hospitals, retail stores, offices, and dozens of other private and public facilities. In many ways, the interior design profession benefits society by focusing on how space—and interior environment—should look and function.

The professional interior designer uses his or her educational preparation and training to consider how the design affects the health, safety, and welfare of occupants. Many projects today include careful consideration of sustainable design in the selection of furniture and materials used in the interior. Planning the arrangement of partition walls, selection of furniture, and specifying aesthetic embellishments for the space are all tasks the designer uses to bring the interior to life. A set of functional and aesthetic requirements expressed by the client becomes reality.

In planning a residence or any type of commercial interior, the professional interior designer engages in many tasks using a wide variety of skills and knowledge gained through education and practice. The professional interior designer must consider building and life safety codes, address environmental issues, and understand the basic construction and mechanical systems of buildings. He or she must effectively communicate design concepts through precisely scaled drawings and other documents used in the industry. Another critical responsibility concerns how to manage all the tasks that must be accomplished to complete a project as large as a 1,000-room casino hotel or as small as someone’s home. The interior designer must also have the business skills to complete projects within budget for the client while making a profit for the design firm. And, of course, the interior designer selects colors, materials, and products so that what is supposed to actually occur in the spaces can.

This book helps you see clearly what the profession is about and what the real work of interior

designers is like in the 21st century. It includes comments from professional interior designers in many specialties, sizes of companies, and areas of the country. These responses are presented to help you get an idea of what working professionals think about the profession. I posed the question “What do interior designers do?” to many of the designers whose work or other comments are in this book. “Problem solving” is a common response, but many other tasks and responsibilities are also mentioned.

### *What Do Interior Designers Do?*

› Residential interior designers support their clients in realizing their dreams and creating a home for their family and friends. We research, design, document, and specify the interior architectural finishes, millwork, plumbing, lighting, cabinetry, and interior design details and work closely with the project team (client, architect, and contractor) to implement them. Second, we bring together the complete vision for the project through the design, research, and implementation of the interior furnishings—from all the furniture to the artwork and accessories.

*Annette Stelmack, Allied Member ASID*

› Create environments that support the human condition in whatever activities it chooses, including living, sleeping, working, playing, eating, shopping, healing, or praying. These environments must be safe, accessible, sustainable, and, in many cases, beautiful. But, most importantly they must be functional for the person(s) inhabiting them.

*Lisa Whited, IIDA, ASID, Maine Certified Designer*

› Interior designers create interior environments that are functional, aesthetically pleasing, and enhance the quality of life and culture of the users of the space. In doing so, they have an obligation to protect the health, safety, and welfare of the public.

*Jan Bast, FASID, IIDA, IDEC*

› We influence life patterns by creating healthy and safe environments.

*Patricia McLaughlin, ASID, RID*

› Interior designers solve problems. Our clients come to us with questions, wants, and needs and through design development we answer those questions and provide solutions for those wants and needs—all while protecting the health, welfare, and safety of the public through our knowledge of local and national building codes.

*Kristin King, ASID*

› Interior designers plan and design interior spaces. Interior designers understand how people move through, live and work in, and experience interior space. We consider the specific experiences and functions the space or project must support from the point of view of the user. Our unique understanding of psychological and human factors as well as formal design principles, materials, codes and regulations, and the means and methods of construction inform our diagnosis of user needs and the development of design concepts.

*Beth Harmon-Vaughn, FIIDA, Associate, AIA, LEED-AP*

› They use their creative skills and expertise to create spaces that improve people’s environments and make life better. More pragmatically, interior designers gather and analyze information, produce drawings, manage consultant teams, and oversee construction projects.

*David Hanson, IDC, RID, IIDA*



Private residence:  
kitchen remodel. Sally  
Howard D'Angelo, ASID,  
S. H. Designs, Windham,  
New Hampshire.

PHOTOGRAPH: BILL FISH

› Good question. Interior design is sometimes described as problem solving, but our work is really focused on helping our clients prepare for a future they can imagine but not fully predict. We develop an image that transforms their vision to reality. The vision is from the client's thoughts and business goals.

We take our client's ideas, expressed in business terms, and give them form, make them reality. That reality is something they could have never imagined themselves and when it is right and becomes their vision, we have succeeded with the magic of design. To do so, designers have to understand their aspirations, not merely their needs.

*Rita Carson Guest, FASID*

› Interior designers are problem solvers who must be able to develop a design that fits the client's criteria and budgets. They must be able to take that design concept and make it reality by preparing the necessary drawings, renderings, details, construction documents, specifications, budgets along with the most important part, which is

creativity and visualization. They also must be very strong in communication and, most important, in being listeners.

*Lisa Slayman, ASID, IIDA*

› Depending upon the project, interior designers investigate existing conditions; research work habits and management philosophies; incorporate work and life culture of space users or clients; explore potential solutions that meet functional and aesthetic goals; conform to code and legal constraints; prepare graphic and written materials that communicate the solutions to a wide variety of people—clients, lenders, committees, other design professionals, code officials, and the building industry; and continue building their knowledge.

*Katherine Ankersen, IDEC, NCARB Certified*

› An interior designer serves many roles. A designer is a mentor to clients and others in the profession. We serve as project managers coordinating many trades and making sure that not only we are doing our job correctly, but that

others are as well. We inspire interiors as well as lives with our work. Sometimes we do the dirty work that no one else wants to do, but in the end the smile on a client's face and the satisfaction that comes from a completed project makes all the project's challenges worth the time and effort.

*Shannon Ferguson, IIDA*

› We are professionals that offer our clients creative solutions in order for the spaces in which they live, work, play, and heal to function better and be more aesthetically pleasing.

*Robert Wright, FASID*

› We do everything for a space: we think through how the space functions based on who is occupying that particular space, how they are going to live there, work there, and function, and design around those parameters. We coordinate colors, furnishings, fabrics, and everything that goes into the environment.

*Laurie Smith, ASID*

› Interior designers design and create interior spaces, whether residential, commercial, or hospitality. The role of the interior designer is to understand the client's vision and goals for the project and interpret them in the design.

*Trisha Wilson, ASID*

› Good designers provide problem resolution through good design.

*Patricia Rowen, ASID, CAPS*

› Every decision an interior designer makes, in one way or another, involves life safety and quality of life. Some of those decisions include specifying furniture, fabric, and carpeting that comply with fire codes, complying with other applicable building codes, designing ergonomic work spaces, planning spaces that provide proper

means of egress, and providing solutions for the handicapped and other persons with special needs.

*Universal design* and *green design* are buzz words right now but they have always been and will continue to always be a part of every project. In addition to all of this, we manage projects, with budget, time, and safety in mind.

*Donna Vining, FASID, IIDA, RID, CAPS*

› If they are good at what they do, they create environments that unfold really *meaningful* experiences for their guests.

*Bruce Brigham, FASID, ISP, IES*

› Interior designers take a client's programmatic needs for a space and combine them with creativity and technical expertise to arrive at a customized space unique to their client.

*Maryanne Hewitt, IIDA*

› Interior design is a service industry. A designer must enjoy working with and helping people. Some of the aspects of commercial interior design include research, psychology, art, color, graphics, design, ergonomics, efficiency, and workflow.

*Mary Knopf, ASID, IIDA, LEED-AP*

› They are problem solvers. They need to be able to translate someone else's idea into a new reality. They need to be able to pick up all the puzzle pieces and reconstruct them into another solution—different from what the box said.

*Linda Isley, IIDA, CID*

› In three words: plan, coordinate, and execute. An interior designer is responsible for distilling the client's thoughts, desires, and budget to create a design plan for the project. The designer then coordinates all the elements within the plan and finally is the moving force for the plan's execution.

*Greta Guelich, ASID*

› Interior designers shape the human experience by creating the spaces in which we interact and live.

*Darcie Miller, NKBA, CMG, ASID Industry Partner*

› The easy answer is we create environments that are not only lovely to look at, but are also functional. But actually we are also therapists, accountants, researchers, organizers, shoppers, and sometimes even movers to realize our concept. The interior designer often becomes a family's most trusted friend as major moves, new additions to the family, new hobbies, or any other family change that affects the interior are discussed with the designer—and often we are the first to know.

*Susan Norman, IIDA*

› Interior designers in the corporate world understand corporate culture, how people work, and what corporations need to attract and retain

personnel. Interior designers study the workplace and create environmental solutions that are productive and fitting for the users.

*Colleen McCafferty, IFMA, USGBC, LEED-CI*

› In the course of my 25-plus-year career, I have worked on a variety of projects from small to very large residential projects, hospitals, and healthcare facilities—which are like little cities—numerous corporate offices, a funeral home, a fire/police station, and a yacht. The scope of work has always been varied within each project. Some include all aspects, from initial client contact and proposals, through schematics and budgeting; design development with space planning, furniture arrangement, selection, specifying, and scheduling; finish selection and scheduling; lighting, artwork, and accessory selection and placement; bid documentation and processing; installation; and working with all types of industry professionals, trades, and vendors. I have experienced the retail setting, design studio, architectural firm, and consulting as an independent designer. I have attended multiple trade shows and markets, traveled the world, and met many people in the process. The body of knowledge reflected in the Council for Interior Design Accreditation (CIDA) Standards is very real in its expectations of what interior designers do.

*Carol Morrow, Ph.D., ASID, IIDA, IDEC*

› They solve problems (whether they are spatial, organizational, programmatic, or aesthetic) that affect people's health, safety, and welfare.

Healthcare: rotunda with mural of Hygeia and Panacea (Greek goddesses of prevention and treatment), Scripps Breast Care Center, La Jolla, California. Interior architecture and design: Jain Malkin, Inc., San Diego, California.

PHOTOGRAPH: GLENN CORMIER



Some are great technicians; some are great designers; some are great teachers; and a rare few are two or all of these. Some work in large offices; some are sole practitioners. Many work in the residential realm while a large number work in the commercial setting (that includes healthcare, hospitality, retail, or corporate work). Nevertheless all collaborate with other design professionals—including engineers and architects, building service/construction experts, and vendors/suppliers of all types.

*David Stone, IIDA, LEED-AP*

› A good interior designer will listen to the client's needs and try to fulfill them to the best of his or her ability—keeping in mind, of course, function and good design.

*Debra Himes, ASID, IIDA*

› Interior designers help the client improve their space, taking into account the client's needs and culture. The nature of projects vary so much that it is difficult to say.

*Jane Coit, Associate Member IIDA*

› Interior designers incorporate a broad range of skills to plan space that is both functional and aesthetically pleasing. Interior designers must juggle the needs of the client within the constraints of issues such as temporary or leased space, tight budgets, and differing aesthetic tastes. Interior designers provide a specialized knowledge base that includes understanding design elements and principles, space planning, life safety issues, codes, and contract documents.

*Laura Busse, IIDA, KYCID*

› Interior designers create meaningful, aesthetically pleasing environments to enhance the intended human activity within the environment.

*Suzan Globus, FASID, LEED-AP*

› The answer quite honestly depends upon whom and when you ask the question. There are many interior designers who focus upon schematic design and design development phases of work, yet there are many interior designers that place their primary attention upon marketing, branding, or the management of design. Many interior designers work collaboratively with a range of professionals and utilize a range of skills on a daily basis, from computer modeling and rendering skills to sketching or rendering perspective drawings by hand.

Many interior designers select fixtures, furniture, and equipment for their current projects and in the course of doing so, compose and complete material boards. Material boards are used to visualize the range of colors, materials, and furnishings for a project. On the other end of the spectrum, interior designers are immersed in creating interior architecture—often working in collaborative professional environments integrating programmatic, structural, material, and lighting aspects into built form. This is the current professional model in Europe. Regardless of where one finds or sees oneself in the spectrum, most interior designers address design from the perspective of the human body—its size, scale, societal and cultural norms, experiential aspects, and so on.

*James Postell, Associate Professor,  
University of Cincinnati*

› Through research, development, and implementation, interior designers improve the quality of life, increase productivity, and protect the health, safety, and welfare of the public.

*Keith Miller, ASID*

› As Nancy Blossom's research shows, some are tastemakers, some are place makers, others are trendsetters. With all respect to Robert Ivy, when

we are at the top of our game, we design holistic spaces that address the spiritual, functional, and life safety needs of our clients. We don't just deal with the finishes and contents of the spaces between the exterior walls. Interior designers need to have an understanding of the context within which they work and understand how their decisions affect structure, site, and infrastructure. All of us deal with the health, safety, and welfare of the public in some way or another through the decisions we make in service to our clients. Even the selection of a simple item like a piece of furniture can have psychological and physiological, as well as code implications. The piece may not project the image that the client wants, it may not support the body properly, and its materials may produce toxic gases in a fire. This, in addition to the larger implications of the interior planning, should give an indication of how far reaching a designer's decisions can be.

*Robert J. Krikac, IDEC*

› Work with clients to create an environment that reinforces and supports their business.

*Nila Leiserowitz, FASID, Associate AIA*

› Create functional, secure living, and working environments that support health, safety, and welfare issues while also raising the quality and enjoyment of life.

*Michael Thomas, FASID, CAPS*

› The interior designer is the bridge between the physical environment and the human in space. Our distinction in the building practice is the wish and capability to help people become more human. And our success is the ability to make these positive connections.

*Linda Sorrento, ASID, IIDA, LEED-AP*

› The interior designer must have a holistic view of any project undertaken. This view comes into play when you see the integration of all the facets and requirements of the project.

An interior designer must have practical and technical expertise, as well as an understanding of the aesthetics, of all elements that make up the interior environment. The designer must understand how people use and respond to these elements. It is not a matter of understanding the individual elements in an interior, but the elements as they interact with each other.

We live, work, and play in a three-dimensional world—spending on average about 80 percent of our time each day indoors.

Interior design deals with the human-built environment. . . . It touches all that we do in both our personal and professional lives. What we see and touch—the environment that surrounds us and how that makes us feel—is most often noticed, and is a direct result of interior design or a lack thereof.

Interior design affects people's lives to a greater degree than any other profession. It affects how we live and move and feel in the built environment—the very quality of our lives.

*Linda Elliott Smith, FASID*

› They are problem solvers foremost. They assess and identify the design problem and they develop the design solution through critical thinking.

*Robin Wagner, ASID, IDEC*

› Interior designers perform a wide range of tasks, so every day is different. From the obvious, like space planning and color selections, to the not so obvious, like personal counseling to late-night photo shoots, there is always something new to do as an interior designer.

*Lindsay Sholdar, ASID*



› First, what I don't do: I don't design anything alone. I illustrate planning concepts with well-developed graphic representations and discuss how these concepts may improve the performance in an office.

*Lisa Henry, ASID*

› Interior designers design interior environments that affect the human experience, to establish a clear understanding of place. That is, they create an identity or image for a commercial or private building, to elicit a personal response such as to relax, entertain, have fun, buy product, heal, learn, teach, impress, and so on, or to support a particular task, that is, to create an efficient and ergonomically correct work environment.

*Rosalyn Cama, FASID*

› In my world, they act as psychiatrists and problem solvers. People need help figuring out how to make their lifestyles fit their residences—and the same goes for their commercial spaces. A designer needs to listen to their clients, their needs, and how they and their families or coworkers use the given spaces. Designs need to provide comfort and functionality—and it is a designer's job to integrate both. Additionally, I feel that my job is to truly make my clients' lives easier. Most people don't want to think about the process of creating the design whether on paper or in true action. I have found that many clients also do not want any part of the construction/deconstruction process either. Therefore, a designer can also take on the role of "go-between" or project manager (to use a more commonly understood phrase).

*Marilizabeth Polizzi, Allied Member ASID*

› There are a broad range of skills involved in interior design. A designer or firm may specialize in a small segment or cover all the tasks involved. We typically clarify a program defining the

constraints and goals for the project, offer and refine creative solutions for the interior space and associated details, make selections for finishes and furnishings, document our findings, create budgets, contract labor, make purchases, and manage the implementation of the project.

*Sally Howard D'Angelo, ASID, AIA Affiliate*

› For my practice, I spend a great deal of time as a client advocate. I help clients sort through the choices that appear overwhelming, to reach a solution that is practical, interesting, and aesthetically pleasing. I want to find solutions to the problems at hand, whether the problems are large or small. If the problems or things that annoy the user have not been dealt with, the project is not a success. Masking something that is not functioning well by making it pretty is not effective design. Another definition of what designers (at least for myself) do is about 5 percent actual design work and 95 percent project administration and oversight.

*Sharmin Pool-Bak, ASID, CAPS, LEED-AP*

› The NCIDQ (National Council for Interior Design Qualification) definition is the best example to me of what interior designers do. However, I believe one of the best definitions is in an article by Jill Pable at Florida State University (and her colleague) that discusses the difference between "filled and fulfilling spaces." I believe that interior designers do not fill, but design and create "fulfilling spaces" based on client needs and desires within a given budget and timeline.

*Stephanie Clemons, Ph.D., ASID, FIDEC*

› Analyze client needs, educate clients, use acquired knowledge to provide solutions that support clients' needs, productivity, strategic plan, and corporate brand.

*Terri Maurer, FASID*

› Interior designers are problem solvers. They provide solutions by addressing such issues as spatial planning, acoustics, and lighting. In addition to creating a functional space, a designer strives to provide an aesthetically pleasing environment for their client.

*Teresa Ridlon, Allied Member ASID*

› If they are doing what I feel they *should* be doing, they work as part of a team with the clients to design spaces that will help the clients lead healthier, happier, safer lives. This goal should be the same whether designing residential or nonresidential spaces. That is the short definition.

*Drue Lawlor, FASID*

› We help create the environments where people live, work, and play.

*Melinda Sechrist, FASID*

› Interior design projects are the design and renovation of interior space within buildings. The interior designer's role is to lead the design process for interior design projects. Interior designers listen to their clients during the programming phase. They bring new research to the design solutions. They create design solutions that meet their clients' needs and exceed their expectations. They document projects for building permit application. They observe construction. Interior designers collaborate with other disciplines throughout the entire project (architects, engineers, lighting designers, vendors, and contractors).

*Rachelle Schoessler Lynn, CID, ASID, LEED-AP, Allied Member AIA*

› Interior designers protect the health, safety, and welfare of the public while creating environments that are appropriate and enjoyable to the occupants of a space.

*Alexis B. Bounds, Allied Member ASID*

› Interior designers create a functioning environment that is aesthetically inspiring. This environment is specific to the client's goals and adheres to all applicable life, health, and safety codes. Green and universal design should be strongly considered.

*Carolyn Ann Ames, Allied Member ASID*

› When it comes right down to it, we're advocates for the end users of a space. We put ourselves in the homeowner's, student's, patient's, customer's, visitor's, or worker's place and create spaces that are safe, comfortable, beautiful, functional, and inviting. Unlike what's shown on TV design shows, design is much more than aesthetics—it's about making better interiors for all of us to inhabit.

*Charrisse Johnston, ASID, LEED-AP, CID*

› Problem solve. We create attractive but functional environments.

*Chris Socci, Allied Member ASID*

› An interior designer is a professional that has the ability through experience and education to create interior environments that serve their end users with functionality and preserve the health, safety, and welfare of the public. Professional interior designers are able to visually enhance spaces. But more importantly, they are able to identify spatial challenges and overcome those obstacles with creative solutions that are developed through researching and observing the physical environments.

*Shannon Mitchener, LEED-AP, Allied Member ASID, Associate IIDA*

## Is Interior Design for You?

Many people think that someone who wants to be an interior designer must be very creative or an artist. It certainly takes creativity to develop plans and design concepts to resolve a client's needs for a professionally designed home environment or commercial space. Few interior designers begin their quest to be part of this profession with innate artistic abilities. These creative or artistic skills are developed through course work and experience, as are the technical skills needed for the development of plans and drawings.

There are many ways to work in the profession as you will see in this book. Not all positions in interior design require a high level of skill in what might be considered artistic endeavors. You may find a place in the profession that uses other skills such as technical mastery of drafting, project organization and management, or the selling skills. The fact that there are many ways in which to work in this profession is an interesting truth for anyone who:

**Enjoys solving problems.**

**Has a concern for details.**

**Observes interiors and tries to figure out how to change them.**

**Can comfortably work with a team.**

**Has creative and artistic abilities and interests.**

If you are interested in interior spaces, find yourself wondering about their design, or can think of ways to make them better, that is a strong first step that shows interest in the profession. Reading books about interior design is, of course, another strong indicator of interest. If you are in high school, you can talk to your guidance counselor or a teacher who teaches interior design, drafting, or art classes. You might also want to talk to an interior designer. Contact the local offices of the professional associations and perhaps they can give you the names of designers who teach interior design at a community college or university. Asking questions of those working in the field is a great way to find out if you are really suited for the profession. This book will give you an overview of the profession. You can also visit Web sites to help you learn more about the profession and career opportunities in interior design, such as [www.careersininteriordesign.com](http://www.careersininteriordesign.com), a joint effort sponsored by professional associations, educators, and testing organizations. The American Society of Interior Designers ([www.asid.org](http://www.asid.org)), International Interior Design Association ([www.iida.org](http://www.iida.org)), and Interior Designers of Canada ([www.interiordesigncanada.org](http://www.interiordesigncanada.org)) are the largest of the professional associations in the United States and Canada and can be contacted for information that can help you decide if becoming a professional interior designer is for you.

## High-End Residential, Construction Remodeling

DONNA VINING, FASID, IIDA, RID, CAPS  
 PRESIDENT, VINING DESIGN ASSOCIATES, INC.  
 HOUSTON, TEXAS



*What has been your greatest challenge as an interior designer?*

› Interpreting clients' wishes and giving them what they want and need.

*How important is interior design education in today's industry?*

› It is monumental. If we are to be a profession, we must have a consistent, quality educational program, ever changing and evolving as today's advances move faster and faster.

*What led you to enter your design specialty?*

› My mother was a huge influence. She was my very own Sister Parish, always decorating our home. When I was a teenager, she opened her own antique shop in a small house on the same property as our home.

*What are your primary responsibilities and duties?*

› Everything. When you are the owner, you have all the financial and managerial type of responsibilities and duties as well as being the lead interior designer. In residential, clients want you, and even though my staff teams on all projects, I am heavily involved in most of them.

*What is the most satisfying part of your job?*

› Hearing the clients say they love our work.

TOP LEFT Private residence: master suite. Donna Vining, FASID, Vining Design Associates, Inc., Houston, Texas.

PHOTOGRAPH: ROB MUIR

LEFT Private residence: living room. Donna Vining, FASID, Vining Design Associates, Inc., Houston, Texas.

PHOTOGRAPH: ROB MUIR

***What is the least satisfying part of your job?***

› Depending on others for my end product—so many people are involved, and it is hard to make things happen just like I want them.

***What is the most important quality or skill of a designer in your specialty?***

› Listening skills and teaching clients what is best for them and their lifestyle.

***What advice would you give someone who wants to be an interior designer?***

› Take business and psychology classes and realize that the actual design portion is a small part of the business.

***Who or what experience has been a major influence on your career?***

› My mother was a huge influence. And once I was in the field, the ability to make things beautiful but always functional and durable.



Private residence: dining room. Donna Vining, FASID, Vining Design Associates, Inc., Houston, Texas.

PHOTOGRAPH: ROB MUIR

***Design of Active Living and Aging-in-Place Communities***

**SHANNON FERGUSON, IIDA**  
**PROJECT MANAGER**  
**ID COLLABORATIVE**  
**GREENSBORO, NORTH CAROLINA**

***What led you to enter your design specialty?***

› Fate, I suppose. . . . After graduation I received an internship with a North Carolina design firm. When I started with them, they worked primarily with local clients in the healthcare and medical fields. After my internship, I stayed on with ID Collaborative and, as the years have progressed,

we have become more well-known in the senior living and active living communities. After procuring several large projects over the last few years I have had the privilege of progressing my skills in active-living communities and aging-in-place communities across the eastern and southern regions of the United States.

***What is the most important quality or skill of a designer in your specialty?***

› In my opinion the most important quality of an effective designer is being able to listen to your client's expectations and desires and turn them into reality.

***How is your specialty different from other specialties?***

› My specialty is different from others because not only do I deal with people's work environment, but also their living environments. To me a living environment is such a personal space that it can either bring happiness or contribute to sadness and depression. So often you see retirement communities and nursing homes that are depressing and run-down. If you had to live in this every day, I would venture to say that you might be subject to despondency and, in turn, a shortened life span. Therefore, dealing with living environments, especially in the aging population, gives me a responsibility to bring renewed life into the environments that I design.

***What are your primary responsibilities and duties in your position?***

› I serve as a project manager and see projects through from start to finish. Initially, I work with clients to determine their scope of services needed as well as work with them on forming a budget for the project. I work with ID Collaborative's principal on design contracts for projects. Once contracts are approved, I work with the client from schematic design planning into design development through to construction documents and contract administration. Throughout this process, I present interior finish schemes, furnishings, and so on for client approval. We are then able to determine the overall concept for the space, its use, and its character. I work with architects, contractors, and other consultants on all aspects of the project including floor plan layouts, reflected ceiling plans, millwork details, architectural details, building codes, and the like.

Once construction is complete and furnishings are installed, a final punch list is completed with the client and the project is followed through to the very end to be sure the client is satisfied and all work is complete.

***What is the most satisfying part of your job?***

› The most satisfying part of my job is working with the client and assisting them in conceptualizing their thoughts and imaginations and turning them into reality.

***What is the least satisfying part of your job?***

› My least favorite part is the feeling that I have not delivered or captured the true form of the client's concept.

***Who or what experience has been a major influence in your career?***

› My firm as a whole has been a major influence on my career. We have a fantastic group of people who all have different specialties that are remarkable and inspiring to me as a designer.

***What has been your greatest challenge as an interior designer?***

› Education of clients and the community. Many people have a misconception as to what it actually is that interior designers do. After watching all of the shows on Bravo and HGTV, they think that interior designers are flamboyant individuals who swoop into a job, do a quick makeover, and are out of the picture as fast as they came in. These shows do not provide the public with any background information on credentials, requirements for interior design certification, or education, and certainly do not provide the public with an actual picture of what true interior designers do on a daily basis.

## GETTING IN

➤ Getting a job in interior design today requires an appropriate education and mastering skills from drafting and drawing to effective communication. It involves learning technical areas of construction, mechanical systems, and codes as well as showing that you have the interest and enthusiasm to work in the profession. Getting in also means knowing what kind of job you want and whether you want to work in a residential or commercial specialty. You also need to consider if you would work best in a small studio, a large multidisciplinary firm, or an intermediate-size practice.

When it comes time to research job possibilities, be sure to do your homework on the companies in which you are interested. If you know something about the company before the interview, you will make a far better impression at the interview. Investigate the style and type of interior design work that the firm does by researching trade magazines and local print media. Look for the firm's Web site and carefully examine as much of it as you can. Talk to professors who know something about the company. Your college placement office might be able to help as well.

You can also find out about possible jobs and about a specific company by researching:

- Department of Commerce articles and reports
- Board of Technical Registration
- Local magazines and newspapers
- Yellow Pages directory
- Dun & Bradstreet Reference Book
- Professional association chapters
- Registrar of Contractors
- Family and friends

You may need two or more versions of your résumé, each specific to a type of design work you are interested in obtaining. For example, you should organize your résumé differently when you apply for a position with a firm primarily engaged in residential design work versus one that specializes in hospitality interior design. The résumé also should be somewhat different if you are applying to a large multidisciplinary firm versus a small firm. The same goes for your portfolio. Showing a commercial firm a portfolio of residential projects could be a waste of time all around. Chapter 3 discusses résumés and portfolios in more detail.

Looking for a job in interior design—whether your first one as you finish school or when you move from one firm to another—is a job in itself. It is important that you go about it in a sensible and organized fashion. The more prepared you are, the more homework you do before you even start your search, the greater your chances of gaining that ideal position. Additional information on the topics related to finding a job can be found in Chapter 3.

## Corporate Headquarters, Offices, and Retail Spaces

FREDERICK MESSNER, IIDA  
PRINCIPAL, PHOENIX DESIGN ONE, INC.  
TEMPE, ARIZONA

### *What has been your greatest challenge as an interior designer?*

› There is a fine balance between the activity of design and the need to handle all the business activities that go into the normal day. They are both necessities and constantly in competition for the ten hours per day we seem to feel are required.

### *What led you to enter your design specialty?*

› From a young age, I was always interested in how things go together and in drawing. As I learned more about the tools of our trade, I became more interested in how I could manipulate space to affect people. My interest is in commercial design because I believe it has the potential to have great impact.

### *What are your primary responsibilities and duties?*

› Design mentor, financial control, strategic planning for the design firm, human resources, design and project management, marketing, and father confessor.

### *What is the most satisfying part of your job?*

› Teaching the many aspects of design as well as practicing the same is the reward that is most enjoyed.

### *What is the least satisfying part of your job?*

› The challenge of dissatisfied clients due to any number of reasons is a part of the job that can be, at times, very difficult.

### *What is the most important quality or skill of a designer in your specialty?*

› The ability to listen and interpret wants and needs with the best possible solution is the mark of a good commercial designer. In the design of office space, it takes knowledge of competing



TOP LEFT Corporate headquarters: entry.  
Fred Messner, IIDA, Phoenix Design One, Inc.,  
Tempe, Arizona.

PHOTOGRAPH: CHRISTIAAN BLOK

LEFT Corporate headquarters: reception area.  
Fred Messner, IIDA, Phoenix Design One, Inc.,  
Tempe, Arizona.

PHOTOGRAPH: CHRISTIAAN BLOK



space and construction methods and understanding of the client's sophistication, budget, and taste as well as timelines. The best solution most often is a compromise that blends the most positive aspects of all.

***How important is interior design education in today's industry?***

› It all starts here. This is the opportunity to start building a base that will last a lifetime. Interests and habits that start in school will carry designers into the profession.

***Who or what experience has been a major influence on your career?***

› My involvement with IBD (Institute of Business Designers) and then IIDA (International Interior Design Association) was a link to my colleagues and the profession. It allowed me to gain insight into everyday occurrences with a different perspective. I have also built valuable friendships.



Corporate headquarters: boardroom. Fred Messner, IIDA, Phoenix Design One, Inc., Tempe, Arizona.

PHOTOGRAPH: CHRISTIAAN BLOK

## History

As a profession, interior design has a comparatively short history. Architects, artisans, and craftspeople completed interiors before interior decorators began offering their services. Architects created the design of a building's structure and often the interiors. They would engage craftspeople to create and produce the furnishings needed to complete the interior. Other artisans lent their expertise with decorative embellishments and the production of handmade pieces for the interior. Of course, all this was accomplished for the world of the wealthy and mighty—not the average person.

Many historians have credited Elsie de Wolfe (1865–1950) as the first person to successfully engage in interior decoration as a career separate from architecture. At about the turn of the 20th century, de Wolfe established a career by offering “interior decoration” services to her society friends in New York City. “She was an actress and a society figure before she began to remodel her own home, transforming typically Victorian rooms with stylish simplicity by using white paint, cheerful colors, and flowery printed chintzes.”<sup>3</sup> Her friends recognized her alternative decor, which was a great contrast to the dark, deep colors and woods of Victorian interiors. She is also believed to be among the first decorators to charge for her services rather than be paid only a commission on the goods she sold to clients.<sup>4</sup>

The door opened for this profession at the turn of the 20th century for several reasons. One was the development of new technologies during the 19th-century Industrial Revolution that helped make possible machine-made furnishings and other products. These mass-produced items were cheaper and more available to the average consumer. As demand for these goods grew, department stores—a new concept in the 19th century—began displaying the new products in their stores, attracting the average consumer. This exposure to new products helped generate interest in the decoration of residences by trained decorators.

The success of the early decorators encouraged many women to seek this avenue of professional and career enrichment. It was, after all, one of the few respectable ways for women to work in the early part of the 20th century. Educational programs were developed to train the early decorators in period styles and to provide the educational background needed to plan interiors. One of the first schools to offer effective training in interior decoration was the New York School of Applied and Fine Arts, now known as Parsons, the New School for Design.

As the profession continued to grow in the major cities, “decorators clubs” were formed in order for the decorators to meet, share ideas, and learn more about their profession. The first national decorators association was formed in 1931 and was called the American Institute of Interior Decorators (AIID)—later to be called the American Institute of Interior Designers (AID). In 1975, the two largest groups of professionals at the time—AID and the National Society of Interior Designers (NSID)—merged to form the American Society of Interior Designers (ASID).

By the 1940s, due to changes in the profession and the built environment industry in general, many individuals working in the field began to call themselves *interior designers* instead of *interior decorators* and to refer to their profession as *interior design* rather than *decorating*. The distinction reflected in these new terms was first applied to those few interior designers working with business clients. In addition, many kinds of new business clients appeared, slowly providing other opportunities for the gradual growth of the commercial interior design profession. Dorothy Draper (1889–1969) is well known for her design of commercial interiors such as hotel lobbies, clubs, and stores. Her influence grew in the 1940s, and she is often identified by historians as one of the first interior designers to specialize in commercial interiors rather than residences.

Of course, numerous influential interior decorators and designers contributed to the development of the profession as we know it today. The names Eleanor McMillen, Ruby Ross Wood, Mrs. Henry Parish II, Billy Baldwin, Florence Schust Knoll, and T. H. Robsjohn-Gibbings are familiar to many practitioners in the field. Architects Frank Lloyd Wright, Mies van der Rohe, and Richard Meier, along with designers David Hicks, Mark Hampton, Michael Graves, and Warren Platner, are just a few of the fine professionals whose talent immeasurably contributed to the growth of the interior design profession in the 20th century. If you would like to learn about the history of the profession in greater detail, you may wish to read one of the books listed in the references.

## Commercial: Healthcare

LINDA ISLEY, IIDA, CID  
 DESIGN DIRECTOR, YOUNG + CO., INC.  
 SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA

### *What led you to enter your design specialty?*

› At the time, the banking industry was closing down and I was hired into a firm that specialized in healthcare. My analytical tendencies work well in this field. My strengths are in the technical aspects of design and construction. In healthcare my strengths are utilized.

### *What is the most important quality or skill of a designer in your specialty?*

› Being able to listen to the needs of all the “end users” (staff, owners, and patients), and being able to turn those desires into an environment that promotes health and healing.

### *How is your specialty different from other specialties?*

› There are many things about the patients you serve that are not documented in the design manuals. You need to be able to interpret the sensitive constraints of fragile health into a solution that is both safe and comfortable.

### *What are your primary responsibilities and duties in your position?*

› I project manage the design and documentation of most of the projects in the office. I review all details that are developed in the office for constructability and understanding.

Healthcare: Balboa Naval Medical Center, Pediatric Intensive Care Unit. Linda Isley, IIDA, Young + Co., Inc., San Diego, California. Architect: Ravatt Albrecht.

PHOTOGRAPH: CAMPOS PHOTOGRAPHY





TOP LEFT Healthcare: Scripps Mercy Medical Group—Mission Valley—waiting room. Linda Isley, IIDA, Young + Co., Inc., San Diego, California. Architect: Rodriguez Park Architects. PHOTOGRAPH: CAMPOS PHOTOGRAPHY

LEFT Healthcare: Scripps Mercy Medical Group—Mission Valley—nurses station. Linda Isley, IIDA, Young + Co., Inc., San Diego, California. Architect: Rodriguez Park Architects. PHOTOGRAPH: CAMPOS PHOTOGRAPHY

***What is the most satisfying part of your job?***

- › The most satisfying is seeing an idea get built.

***What is the least satisfying part of your job?***

- › The least satisfying is being described as a “decorator” and not being understood for what knowledge you bring to the design team. Especially when we are relegated to being only the “finish applicators.”

***Who or what experience has been a major influence in your career?***

- › I have always gravitated to an office that has utilized my abilities to develop elevations and design details. The more experience, the better I became. I spent my first five years out of school in an architect’s office doing documentation and presentation work.

***What has been your greatest challenge as an interior designer?***

- › Overcoming stereotypes.

## Sustainable Design

Watching the news you have no doubt become aware of how our environment is under siege from depletion of resources and climate changes that change the earth and our lives. Did you know that 40 percent of what goes to landfills is construction waste? According to the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC), buildings consume between 30 and 40 percent of all energy used.<sup>5</sup> The depletion of resources also affects the built environment and the work of many in interior design and architecture. Sustainable design of both residential and commercial interiors will continue to play a very important role in the interior design profession in the 21st century.

The designs, construction methods, materials, and products specified for buildings and interiors all have an impact on the environment as well as the users of buildings. Resources are depleted and landfills become clogged with materials that may never disintegrate. The indoor environment can be harmful to people with allergies. Finding ways to design interior environments and buildings in general is increasingly focusing on sustainable design.

But what is sustainable design? “Sustainable design seeks to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs.”<sup>6</sup> Concepts in sustainable design in architecture and interior design have emerged since the 1970s though, of course, concern for the environment goes back many more years. Sustainable design is sometimes thought of as green design. Sustainable and green design seeks to create not only designs that utilize materials wisely, but also manufacturing and construction processes that result in as little harm to the environment and the user as possible while meeting the needs of the building’s owners and users.

Materials and products specified for interiors also affect the interior environment in another way. Indoor air quality can be harmful to many users of residences and commercial spaces due to the materials that are specified. Toxic fumes referred to as *volatile organic compounds* (VOCs) are emitted from carpeting, paints, wall coverings, and furniture products. These VOCs result from glues used to manufacture furniture, adhesives used to attach carpets to floors and wall coverings to walls, and paint. These fumes are irritants and cause allergic reactions in some individuals.

Sustainable design concepts affect the home as well. For example, homes are built much tighter today, meaning that contractors attempt to keep air leaking in or out of a house to a minimum. This is done to increase the energy efficiency of the house. Unfortunately, the materials used to finish the interior can create VOCs—as can the furniture and furnishing products specified for the residential interior.

The U.S. Green Building Council is a nonprofit organization that has brought architects, contractors, product manufacturers, interior designers, and others in the built environment industry together to find ways to increase knowledge and practice in sustainable design. Their educational programs help all these different entities understand how to design buildings that are healthier for the occupants and save resources. A program developed by the USGBC is the LEED Certification program. LEED stands for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design. It is a way that building owners and designers can voluntarily create buildings that are healthy and environmentally responsible. “LEED Certification validates a building owner’s efforts to create a green building.”<sup>7</sup>

There are several books listed in the “Interior Design References” (page 310) that examine sustainable design in interior design. You can also find more information from the USGBC ([www.usgbc.org](http://www.usgbc.org)).

### ***Residential: Sustainable Design***

**ANNETTE K. STELMACK, ASID ALLIED MEMBER  
ECOIST, CONSULTANT, SPEAKER,  
AND OWNER, INSPIRIT  
LOUISVILLE, COLORADO**



Sustainable residence: living room, Lake Pines. Annette Stelmack, Allied Member ASID, Inspirit-llc, Louisville, Colorado; formerly with Associates III. Architect: Doug Graybeal, Graybeal Architects (formerly with CCY Architects).

PHOTOGRAPH: DAVID O. MARLOW

#### ***What led you to enter your design specialty?***

› My upbringing as a first-generation American inspired my natural approach to interior design. My family recycled and reused everything. My love for nature and all living creatures was nurtured throughout my childhood and then I too passed this value on to my husband and son. My son enjoys teasing me that I was recycling for the entire office before Denver had the facilities. I would load my car up weekly with the recyclables and deposit them at our local recycling center in Boulder, Colorado. This started more than 20 years ago as my son Bryan is now 25; he was always my assistant on these trips. From the onset, I was continually drawn to organic design forms, finishes, and objects that ultimately led to my area of expertise in the arena of sustainable residential design. I have a deep compassionate caring for our environment and for the future generations of all living species. I am continually inspired by both Mother Earth and her and our children.

#### ***What is the most important quality or skill of a designer in your specialty?***

› Being knowledgeable and literate is vital within all specialties of interior design, including sustainable residential interior design. Initially, I drew from the commercial design sector as they were leading the way in sustainable design. Today, there is an overflowing abundance of information available at our fingertips for all sectors of the market. For environmental resources, I consistently refer to the Internet and books, along with participating in organizations such

Sustainable residence: kitchen, Lake Pines. Annette Stelmack, Allied Member ASID, Inspirit-llc, Louisville, Colorado; formerly with Associates III. Architect: Doug Graybeal, Graybeal Architects (formerly with CCY Architects).

PHOTOGRAPH: DAVID O. MARLOW



as U.S. Green Building Council, ASID, and AIA-COTE. The Internet, books, and networking with like-minded individuals across all sectors of the building industry provide a depth of knowledge and experience that is fundamental in honing and developing our expertise. In tandem with knowledge must be our listening skills. Intuitively listening beyond the words of our clients and team members brings a synergy in our work that transcends the details and, as though by magic, reveals our client's vision. I have found that this brings together exceptional results—from great team chemistry to proactive problem solving to exceeding the client's expectations.

***How is your specialty different from other specialties?***

› Ultimately sustainable, green, eco-friendly design will no longer be a separate set of skills, knowledge, language, or practice. Sustainable design principles and practices are now being incorporated into interior design schools across the country. The Council for Interior Design Accreditation has set forth standards pertaining to

sustainability. Accredited programs must provide education that includes the environmental ethics and the role of sustainability in the practice of interior design.

***What are your primary responsibilities and duties in your position?***

› I was the design director of Associates III Interior Design for over 25 years and an integral member from 1979 to 2006. Associates III is recognized on numerous fronts for their beautiful interiors and earth-friendly design philosophy. I was instrumental in mentoring and coleading this model firm, pioneering the field of sustainable residential interior design with our company vision: *We are environmental stewards with a passion to create nurturing, healthy, and sustaining environments.*

As the design director and a senior project designer with Associates III, I was responsible for managing the design team and overseeing projects, budgets, and deadlines. In addition, I was responsible for business development and departmental management tasks. I also managed

projects, leading my teams to the successful completion of the most challenging and largest scale projects taken on by the company. As the environmental leader at Associates III, I formalized and managed the environmental and sustainable efforts on behalf of the firm.

I am also the coauthor of *Sustainable Residential Interiors* (John Wiley & Sons, 2006) with my Associates III friends Kari Foster and Debbie Hindman. Our book clearly and succinctly lays out strategies and tools to meet not only homeowners' needs, but those of the planet.

Over the last two years I have been transitioning out of practicing interior design into my next venture, Inspirit: To Instill Courage & Life. This firm allows me to fuse my passion for environmental stewardship and creativity in order to inspire future generations. I actively teach and mentor sustainability to peers, parents, and students of all ages. My expertise, synergy, and passion for natural and ecological design and responsible living are reflected in all my work. As environmental advocacy and literacy is paramount to me, I'm thrilled to share my expansive knowledge in the arena of environmental sustainability by sharing my passion with all.

I lecture on sustainability and eco-design at building industry events such as "Interiors," the American Society of Interior Designers' annual conference, and other venues. I have been interviewed for *American Architectural Review*, a PBS series spotlighting green design education. And I serve on several committees, including the national ASID Sustainable Design Council and the U. S. Green Building Council—Colorado Chapter.

I am equally moved by others and seek to live by Mahatma Gandhi's inspirational words: "You must be the change you wish to see in the world."

***What is the most satisfying part of your job?***

› The most satisfying part of my job is connecting with people and nurturing relationships. I also love proactively solving problems in addition to mentoring team members' growth and success.

***What is the least satisfying part of your job?***

› As I am now transitioning out of design into my role as an eco-consult, eco-outreach, and eco-education, the part that I won't miss is the lack of perspective that some clients have on the completion of their projects and meeting their unrealistic deadlines. There are other issues more important to the world than whether or not a sofa is going to be delivered at a certain time.

***Who or what experience has been a major influence in your career?***

› In addition to my upbringing, as I already mentioned, attending the EnvironDesign2 conference in 1998 was a pivotal and focused event that fully acknowledged my values and ethics. The experience was emotional and intense. I was moved deeply by William McDonough, Paul Hawken, Sim Van der Ryn, and many others over the course of the weekend conference, and it changed my life for the good. My newfound conviction for environmentally responsible, green building became a motivating force in the firm. I was fortunate to find synergistic alignment with the owner of the Associates III, Kari Foster, who fully supported the next steps of transforming the company. As the environmental leader of the firm, I engaged everyone to identify obvious action steps toward being more environmentally responsible and we used the small successes to build our sustainable practice into an everyday part of our interior design business.



***What has been your greatest challenge as an interior designer?***

› Being patient while the mainstream market—clients, team members, manufacturers, contractors, architects, vendors—begins to recognize the invaluable aspects of integrating sustainable

design principles, philosophies, and practices into everything we do. Every decision we make affects the next; it's a chain reaction of good or negative results that directly affects the one and only planet that we live on.

***Commercial: Sustainable Design***

**RACHELLE SCHOESSLER LYNN, CID, ASID, IFMA,  
USGBC, LEED-AP, ALLIED MEMBER AIA  
PARTNER, STUDIO 2030  
MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA**

***What led you to enter your design specialty?***

› I am a commercial interior designer. I integrate sustainable design thinking into all of my projects. Interior designers have a profound impact on how the indoor environment affects human health.

***What is the most important quality or skill of a designer in your specialty?***

› The ability to collaborate and discover the best sustainable design solution. The ability to brainstorm openly with others in order to explore the possibilities for creating a world generous in resources for the next generations.

Restaurant: Red Stag Supper Club, dining room. A LEED-qualified interior. Rachele Schoessler Lynn, ASID, CID, LEED-AP, Studio 2030, Inc., Minneapolis, Minnesota.

PHOTOGRAPH: ERIC MELZER  
PHOTOGRAPHY

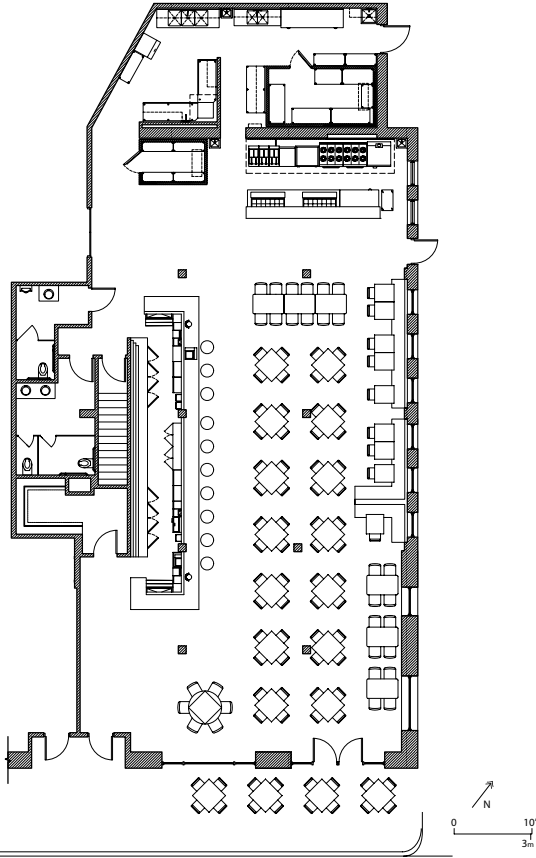
***How is your specialty different from other specialties?***

› Sustainable design thinking is integrated into every design specialty. It is not an additional service. It is integrated thinking from the conception of a project.

***What are your primary responsibilities and duties in your position?***

› I am the cofounder of Studio 2030. My business partner David Loehr and I are responsible for all aspects of managing our business. We love to collaborate with our design talent on projects.





***What is the most satisfying part of your job?***

› The most satisfying aspect of my job is when the client has that “aha” moment. When the client has experienced the project vision in person upon construction completion and when the employees and client respond well to the new environment.

***What do you enjoy most about working in the firm you are in right now?***

› I love working with passionate, talented, smart designers who produce great work for our clients.

***What advice would you give to someone who wants to be an interior designer?***

› Design comes from the soul. This profession is about giving, and the reward is the joy our clients experience.

***What is the single most important skill an interior designer needs to be successful?***

› Passion for great design.



TOP LEFT Restaurant: Red Stag Supper Club, floor plan. Rachele Schoessler Lynn, ASID, CID, LEED-AP, Studio 2030, Inc., Minneapolis, Minnesota.

LEFT Restaurant: Red Stag Supper Club, bar. A LEED-qualified interior. Rachele Schoessler Lynn, ASID, CID, LEED-AP, Studio 2030, Inc., Minneapolis, Minnesota.

PHOTOGRAPH: ERIC MELZER PHOTOGRAPHY

## What Do You Feel Is the Impact of Sustainable Design on the Profession?

› Sustainable design must be environmentally as well as socially and economically thoughtful in order to be truly sustainable. It is the foundation of design for the future.

*Beth Harmon-Vaughn, FIIDA, Assoc. AIA, LEED-AP*

› As an industry, I think that sustainable design is in its early years at this point. I have several clients who have inquired about sustainable products, but very few that actually follow through with them. Part of the reason for this seems to be cost factors and another part is education and time. Currently, these are products and concepts that you have to pursue as an architect or designer. However, in the years to come, I imagine that this concept will become so common that it will be hard not to specify products with recycled content or labeled as “green.”

*Shannon Ferguson, IIDA*

› Sustainability is a whole new world. We are used to tearing down and just creating new. For the good of the world, we need to start looking at alternate ways to reuse materials, walls, and furniture, looking for ways to keep materials from the landfill and still give great solutions to the client. This is a time where creativity is really going to challenge our solutions.

*Colleen McCafferty, IFMA, USGBC, LEED-CI*

› Huge! I have been serving as adjunct faculty at several New England schools since 2001. I tell my students that it is a given that they must design for safety (fire and building codes), accessibility (ADA and universal design), and sustainability. We all have an ethical obligation to do everything we can in the design professions to protect the earth for our children and grandchildren. Sustainable design is not a specialty—it is simply a requirement for *all* design.

*Lisa Whited, IIDA, ASID, Maine  
Certified Interior Designer*

› We are just beginning to feel the impact of sustainability. It is integrated to the design process.

*Nila Lesierwitz, FASID, Associate AIA*

› Green design is not a current fad. It is a philosophical orientation and holds enormous potential for the future of interior design.

*James Postell, Associate Professor,  
University of Cincinnati*

› Sustainable design is becoming mainstream and clients are beginning to take notice and ask designers to design their spaces with sustainable resources where possible without stressing their budgets.

Interior designers are struggling to find sustainable products at the same time manufacturers are struggling to determine how to transform their manufacturing operations and products to become sustainable. There are no standard means of measurement at this time so the interior designer’s biggest challenge is to determine which products are truly sustainable.

*Rita Guest, FASID*

› Sustainable design is something that we all should be practicing in every aspect of our profession and our personal lives. Using materials and products and creating solutions that are sustainable and healthy makes sense for your clientele and the community at large. A sustainable solution should encompass life cycle costs in both real dollars and environmental impact. Designers need to understand the reality of sustainable design in order to remain viable in today’s marketplace.

*Mary Knopf, ASID, IIDA, LEED-AP*



Restaurant: entry. William Peace, ASID, Peace Design, Atlanta, Georgia.

PHOTOGRAPH: CHRIS A. LITTLE

› We have an imperative to correct the spiral of negative influence humans have exerted on our planet, and to make responsible choices that improve the environment, at the very least that do it no further harm.

**Katherine Ankerson, IDEC, NCARB Certified**

› Sustainable design or rather sustainable lifestyle is more than just a trend, it is a reality which should dictate all aspects of all professions not just interior design. We have a great responsibility to overcome and will once the commitment is made. We *all* just need to commit.

**Darcie Miller, NKBA, ASID Industry Partner, CMG**

› My hope for our profession is that sustainable design will become the standard and not the exception. As individuals we can make a small difference, but as professionals we have the unique opportunity to educate our clients and the public on the impact of careless design decisions. We can effect change toward sustainability on a much larger scale than most. Our responsibility is to protect the health, safety, and welfare of not just the public but of the environment as well.

**Lindsay Sholdar, ASID**

› Sustainable design is a way of life and is here to stay. It affects every aspect of design and the interior and exterior spaces we shape. I think the philosophy and culture of sustainable design has been implemented in our nation so quickly, because (1) our children were taught about it in elementary school and they taught their parents, (2) it makes sense, and (3) we are already seeing the impact of the *opposite of sustainable design* in our atmosphere and environments. Sustainable design aspects should completely permeate all curriculum in interior design education. It should be the only way to design future spaces.

**Stephanie Clemons, Ph.D., FASID, FIDEC**

› I have always lamented at the category of sustainable design. I think that good design should inherently be sustainable. But currently, it is viewed as a category. Sustainable design is critical, especially as we are stewards of so many materials that go into a job. It is an opportunity for the designer to have a teaching role with clients and educate them on the benefits of sustainable approaches to interior design. Not just the environmental and health benefits, but the

economic benefits of green strategies. It puts a lot of power in the designer's hands to be able to show a financial model of the return on investment. These conversations we have about the financial impact of many different interior design strategies add tremendous value to our clients.

*Lisa Henry, ASID*

› Sustainable design is very important in the industry at the present and is just becoming important to the public as they are made aware of the consequences of their lifestyle choices. In 20 years, the buzz may have faded some, but will grow stronger during the immediate future.

*Sally D'Angelo, ASID,  
Affiliate Member AIA*

› Sustainable design affects the health of the earth and the health of my clients. It is my obligation as a professional interior designer and a human being to protect both.

*Kristin King, ASID*

› Within just a few more years, I believe all of our interior design projects will include sustainable, green solutions because we will be more aware of the issues, better educated, and our clients will expect it.

*Robert Wright, FASID*

› Sustainable design is really the responsibility of all of us. We have the opportunity as designers to specify products that will contribute to greener buildings. But we also have the responsibility to really check out the long-term effects of some of the products that we are told are green only to find out they fail sooner and end up in the landfill with worse consequences than a traditional product.

*Melinda Sechrist, FASID*

› In the '80s, it was life cycle design—looking at the cost effects of our interior FFE (furniture, fixtures, and equipment) decisions. Now we must take a broader look at the effects of the choices that we make as the negative impact of human activities on the environment has become clear. Especially in the U.S., where we still consume a disproportionate amount of the world's resources. Sustainability is not a passing fad, but is becoming a necessary mindset for how we go about our lives and the decisions that we make about the built environment. It is becoming more common for students and professionals to be LEED-AP. Clients are beginning to require more sustainability aspects be designed in to their projects not just for the PR, but because it makes good business from a facilities management and financial point of view. With the continuing rise of energy costs, LEED approaches to buildings can have a fast payback of increased first cost and continued operational savings. Sustainable approaches to design can also be used to recruit and retain the best of a generation that lists the environment as a high priority. The impact on design education is clear: sustainability is here for a long time and we need to be preparing our graduates in this area.

*Robert J. Krikac, IDEC*

› We as designers have the opportunity to change the direction of global warming. The buildings and the interiors that we design are major contributors to landfill waste, air quality, water quality and consumption, pollution, energy consumption due to building operations, and energy consumption due to manufacturing of materials required for construction.

*Rachelle Schoessler Lynn, CID, ASID,  
LEED-AP, Allied Member AIA*

The importance of sustainable design is addressed again in Chapter 4.

## ETHICAL STANDARDS

➤ The consequences of unethical behavior by politicians, business leaders, sports figures, and many others are widely discussed in the media. Ethical behavior by all members of our society is expected, though not always forthcoming.

Ethical standards help those engaged in a specific profession understand what is considered right and wrong in the performance of the work of the profession. In the case of interior design, ethical standards are guidelines for the practitioner's work relationships with clients, other interior design professionals, employers, the profession in general, and the public.

Interior design professionals who affiliate with a professional association are required to abide by that organization's written code of ethical standards. When they do not, the association may take action against them—and it does not take ethics charges lightly. Designers who remain independent are also expected to conduct their business in an ethical manner, although they cannot be charged with ethics violations. Many unethical actions have legal consequences as well.

Behaving ethically is not hard. Keeping promises made to those you work with and for, only taking work for which you are experienced and capable to accomplish, abiding by the laws within your state regarding the business practice of interior design, and respecting the client and others are not difficult tasks. These are a sampling of what constitutes ethical behavior. What is hard is facing the consequences when one behaves in an unethical manner, regardless of whether one is affiliated with an interior design professional association. You can read the various codes of ethics adopted by interior design organizations by referring to their Web sites (see “Interior Design Resources” on page 297).



Private residence: hall table and mirror. Greta Guelich, ASID, Perceptions Interior Design Group LLC, Scottsdale, Arizona.

PHOTOGRAPH: MARK BOISCLAIR

## Education and Research

KATHERINE S. ANKERSON, IDEC, NCARB  
 CERTIFIED  
 UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA-LINCOLN  
 LINCOLN, NEBRASKA

### *What is your design practice or research specialty?*

› Two areas of interest have driven my research. First, improving teaching and learning in interior design with a particular emphasis on using technology and with strong educational strategies to create interactive animations and simulations. Second, improving the built environment for the aging individual by investigating and creating strategies for a supportive and livable home environment.

### *What advice would you give to someone who wants to be an interior designer?*

› This is an exciting and challenging field, where you have an opportunity to affect people's lives through the designed environment. Observe and be curious about everything around you, keep a sketchbook for observations and resulting ideas and thoughts. Develop your interpersonal skills alongside your design skills. Approach every task with excellence in mind. Go beyond—take every advantage to be a leader. Remember that you have a unique set of skills and knowledge that allow you to view problems much differently than most, and do not hesitate to use this uniqueness to contribute back to society in the betterment of the human condition.

### *What has been your greatest challenge as an interior designer/faculty member?*

› The greatest challenge of being an interior design educator is also one of the most exciting—to keep current with the profession and issues facing it, and to go beyond knowledge of the immediate to look towards future implications of those issues and what will be facing future interior design graduates.

### *What is the single most important skill an interior designer needs to be successful?*

› A passion for the power of design.

### *Why did you become an educator?*

› Through all aspects of my life, I have been an educator of sorts. In the office setting, I mentored new professionals; in personal life, I engaged in activities such as coaching that involve teaching young people new skills and teamwork. Education is a natural fit to combine the passion for design with the leadership gifts that I possess. After teaching my first class, I was hooked. The impact we as educators have on the future of the interior design profession, the blossoming of students realizing their potential, the “aha” moments when you see in one's eyes that they “get it”—each of these continue to affect me in a positive and reinforcing manner.

### *What are a few characteristics of a good student?*

› A broad curiosity and the willingness to explore and expand their knowledge. An excitement about knowledge and the application of such. Understanding they are in school to learn, that they do not already have all the answers. Being willing to engage in critical discourse about design and other subjects.

## Professional Associations

A professional association helps to represent its membership to the general public. An association also provides information and learning opportunities to enhance the membership's practice of the profession. Several associations serve members of the interior design profession in the United States and Canada. Some, such as the American Society of Interior Designers (ASID), serve broad segments of the profession. Others, such as the Institute of Store Planners (ISP), represent specialty designers. The two largest associations in the United States are ASID, with over 40,000 members, and the International Interior Design Association (IIDA), with over 12,000 members. In Canada, the Interior Designers of Canada (IDC) is the national professional association. Seven Canadian provinces also have provincial associations that support local interior designers.

When you become a member of a professional association, you join a network of colleagues with similar interests. Many interior designers are sole practitioners, working by themselves from home offices or small studios. Networking opportunities with members in the local area is a great assistance to these small business owners and a reason many give for joining a professional association.

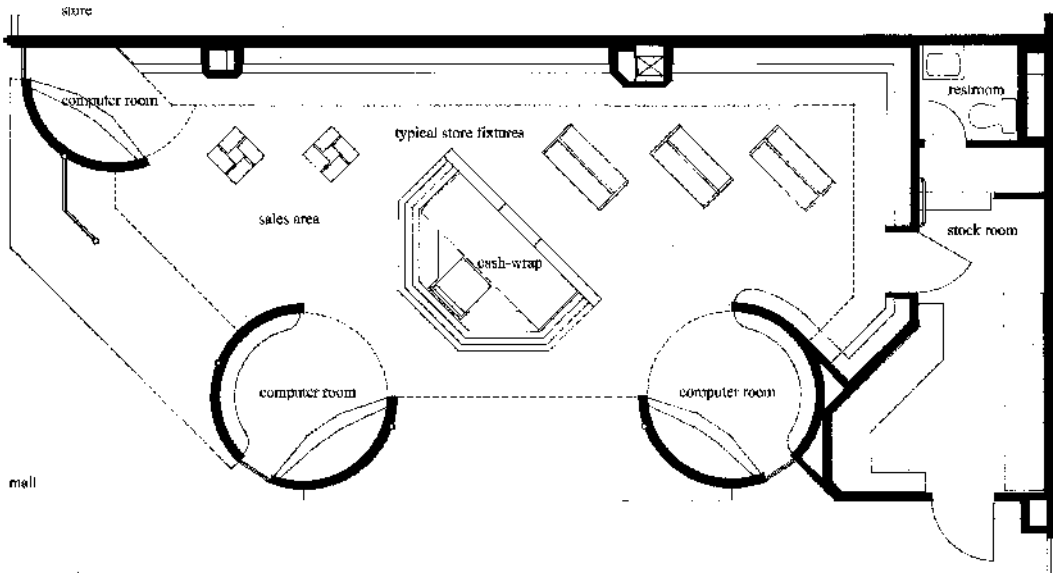
Chapter and national activities of associations give sole practitioners and designers in larger firms opportunities to obtain and exchange information and gain from peer relationships. Becoming involved in chapter and national committees gives members another opportunity to hone leadership and management skills as well as to form extended networks that develop into valuable resources for both personal and professional growth.

Members of associations are able to take advantage of the services offered by a headquarters staff that analyzes and disseminates large amounts of information that the nonaffiliated designer may not have access to, let alone time to read and absorb. Professional associations also serve as a filter and source of information to help members address issues related to interior design practice, thus helping them remain effective practitioners of interior design.

Association members obtain information via e-mail news flashes, association magazines or newsletters, and mailings, as well as national and regional conferences. In the electronic age, the national association's Web site provides a great deal of important information to interior designers, some of it available only to members. In addition, local chapters throughout the United States and Canada hold member meetings on the local level and provide information via chapter meetings, electronic communications, educational seminars, and newsletters.

Professional association membership conveys a meaningful credential that is important in marketing to potential clients. The prestige this offers helps you compete against individuals who have not obtained the education and other competency qualifications of association members. Acceptance into an association, especially at the highest level of membership termed "professional," means you have met stringent criteria related to education, experience, and competency testing. Becoming a member of an interior design professional association also means you are bound to abide by stated ethical standards and conduct.





An important responsibility of the associations is to function on behalf of members in relation to government regulation and to national and even international issues. Professional associations have staff departments that research governmental regulations that might affect the professional practice of interior design and the health, safety, and welfare of the public. This information is forwarded so individual state or provincial chapters can inform local members about impending legislation, regulation, and other issues that affect the profession. Individual members also obtain much of this information via mailings and e-mail news flashes.

Retail: floor plan. The Electronics Boutique, Woodbridge Center, Woodbridge, New Jersey. Architect: John Mclean, RA, AIA, John Mclean Architect. White Plains, New York.

Which association is best for you? You alone can answer that question by becoming involved in one. A student in an interior design program can become a student member of the national associations. Upon graduation, the student can advance to the first level of practitioner membership. Although each association provides similar services, the activities of the local chapters often differ; this commonly influences the individual's choice of organization. Attending a few local chapter meetings and getting to know people in them will help you determine which association is right for you.

So you may have an understanding of the qualifications of membership in a professional association, "Membership Qualifications" (see page 34) provides a brief overview of membership qualification for ASID and IIDA. These associations were selected because they are the biggest, in terms of membership, in the United States. Membership qualifications in other associations may vary. "Other Professional Associations" (see page 35) gives short descriptions of some additional professional interior design associations.

## CANADIAN INTERIOR DESIGN PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

### National Association

Interior Designers of Canada (IDC)

### Provincial Associations

Registered Interior Designers of Alberta

Interior Designers Institute of British Columbia

Professional Interior Designers Institute of Manitoba

Association of Registered Interior Designers of New Brunswick

Association of Interior Designers of Nova Scotia

Association of Registered Interior Designers of Ontario

Interior Designers Association of Saskatchewan

## MEMBERSHIP QUALIFICATIONS

### American Society of Interior Designers (ASID)

#### Professional

Graduation from recognized program of study in interior design.

Educational requirement must meet National Council for Interior Design Qualification (NCIDQ) requirements.

Minimum two years' work experience in interior design.

Completed NCIDQ examination.

Six hours (0.6) continuing education unit (CEU) credits every two years.

Appellation usage (Member Name, ASID).

#### Allied

Graduation from recognized program of study in interior design.

Minimum two years' work experience in interior design.

Six hours (0.6) continuing education unit (CEU) credits every two years.

Appellation usage (Member Name, Allied Member ASID).

Other membership categories exist for individuals who are not interior design practitioners.

### International Interior Design Association (IIDA)

#### Professional

Graduation from recognized program of study in interior design.

Educational requirement must meet NCIDQ requirements.

Minimum two years' work experience in interior design.

Completed NCIDQ examination.

Ten hours (1.0) continuing education unit (CEU) credits every two years.

Appellation usage (Member Name, IIDA).

#### Associate

Graduation from recognized program of study in interior design.

Minimum two years' work experience in interior design.

10 hours (1.0) CEU credits every two years.

Appellation usage (Member Name, Associate Member IIDA).

Other membership categories exist for individuals who are not interior design practitioners.

**Note:** NCIDQ requires a minimum of six years of education and work experience in order to qualify to take the examination. The minimum educational requirement by NCIDQ is a two-year certificate in interior design.

## OTHER PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

### American Institute of Architects (AIA)

Represents the interests of professional architects. Interior designers may be eligible for affiliate membership in a local AIA chapter.

### Building Office and Management Association (BOMA)

Members are primarily owners or managers of office buildings. Interior designers who work for firms specializing in large corporate office facilities often belong to BOMA.

### Interior Designers of Canada (IDC)

The national association of Canadian interior designers. It deals with issues of national and international interest on behalf of the members of the provincial associations (see “Canadian Interior Design Professional Associations,” page 34).

### International Facility Management Association (IFMA)

Members are primarily those responsible for the management and/or planning of corporate facilities. IFMA members may work for a corporation such as a large banking institution or a public utility such as AT&T, or be independent facility planners/space planners.

### Institute of Store Planners (ISP)

Represents interior designers who specialize in retail stores and department stores.

### National Kitchen and Bath Association (NKBA)

Represents interior designers who specialize in kitchen and/or bath design or are retailers of products for kitchens and baths such as cabinet makers.

### U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC)

Represents individuals from across the built environment industry working to promote buildings that are environmentally healthy to live and work in. An affiliated program with the USGBC is the LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) accreditation program. A designer can choose to be a LEED-Accredited Professional (LEED-AP) by learning and demonstrating a comprehensive understanding of green design and building practices.

### Certified Aging-in-Place Specialist (CAPS)

This certification is for individuals who achieve additional experience, technical skills, business knowledge, and customer service skills necessary for working with mature adult clients and others in the aging-in-place segment of the industry.

**Note:** Many other specialty associations may be of benefit to interior designers, depending on their specialty practice. Some are listed in “Interior Design Resources” (see page 297); others may be found in interior design trade magazines such as *Interior Design*, *Contract*, and *Interiors and Sources*.

## ***Sustainable Design***

LINDA SORRENTO, ASID, IIDA, LEED-AP  
DIRECTOR, EDUCATION & RESEARCH  
PARTNERSHIPS  
U.S. GREEN BUILDING COUNCIL  
WASHINGTON, DC

### ***What led you to enter your design specialty?***

› My extended family is comprised of artists and engineers extremely close to the natural environment and volunteerism. I began as a fine artist and discovered interior design as it was emerging as a profession. I was fortunate that there is a profession with all the assets to combine my family heritage and purpose.

### ***What is the most important quality or skill of a designer in your specialty?***

› The interior designer has a responsibility to improve their skills through continuous learning.

### ***How is your specialty different from other specialties?***

› Sustainable design is the basis for all specialties to make decisions for the long term to ensure health and good life for our children and their children.

### ***What are your primary responsibilities and duties in your position?***

› I initiate and maintain strategic relationships with key industry organizations and partners to advance the USGBC's mission of sustainable market transformation and its education and research objectives.

### ***What is the most satisfying part of your job? The least?***

› I work with an enormous diversity of players in the sustainable built environment and, therefore, open the door for the interior design profession with all sorts of people. Albeit, the least satisfying part of the job is my difficulty in balancing work and life.

### ***Who or what experience has been a major influence in your career?***

› Most importantly, Penny Bonda, FASID, who inspired my professional transformation and shift to sustainable design and all the volunteers that I've worked with in this profession.

### ***What has been your greatest challenge as an interior designer?***

› The greatest frustration is that the profession continues to be undervalued.

## **Interior Design Registration and Licensing**

In 2008, 24 states, Washington, D.C., and Puerto Rico—as well as the Canadian provinces—had some type of interior design legislation. Another 10 states had legislation pending. Why are interior designers around the country seeking legislation? Regardless of the type of space being designed, the work of those involved in interior design affects the life safety and health of those that use interior spaces. For example, many of the products that are used in an interior give off toxic fumes that can be harmful to many people who have respiratory problems, and many give off toxic fumes when burned. Interior specification of materials and products is done primarily by interior designers, not

the architects who design commercial buildings and homes. Having knowledge to select and specify these products goes way beyond only considering the aesthetics of the products.

Beginning in 1982, states began passing legislation to license or register professionals working in interior design. Of course, attempts to regulate interior design practice had been made before. Alabama was the first state to successfully enact legislation affecting interior design. Although legislation varies from jurisdiction to jurisdiction, legislation concerning the interior design profession generally requires specific educational, work experience, and testing requirements in order for individuals to work as, or call themselves, an interior designer. See “Interior Design Registration Laws in the United States” (page 38) for a list of states that have legislation pertaining to interior design work and the type of legislation that has been enacted. Canadian provinces with provincial associations all have some form of legislation.

Legislation can take many forms. In some states, it restricts who may call himself or herself an interior designer. In this case, the legislation is commonly referred to as *title registration*. The legislation regulates what title is affected. In some states the regulated title is *interior designer*. In most others it might be *certified interior designer* or *registered interior designer*. A title act does not limit who may practice interior design, but rather limits the title one may use as a practitioner.

Where such legislation exists, an individual cannot advertise himself or herself as a *registered interior designer* or *certified interior designer* unless he or she meets the education, experience, and examination requirements defined by the jurisdiction. This type of legislation is currently the norm in 18 states and the Canadian provinces.

Some jurisdictions have passed legislation that limits who may practice interior design services as described by a state board of technical registration. If designers do not pursue and meet the requirements set by the state to practice the profession, then they are prohibited from performing the professional services of an interior designer as defined by the state. This type of legislation is called a *practice act*. Generally, interior designers working where a practice act has been established are called *registered interior designer* or *interior designer* depending on the exact language of the law in the jurisdiction. As of 2007, only Florida, Alabama, Louisiana, Nevada, Washington, D.C., and Puerto Rico had enacted practice act legislation.

Within selected jurisdictions, licensing or other registration assures the consumer of interior design services that the person hired for the project has the training, experience, and competence to render professional interior design services. With licensure, problems occurring in the interior design phase are the responsibility of the interior designer; the client has the opportunity to file a complaint with the state board, which can discipline the designer. This protection does not exist where licensing is not in effect. Interior designers use a combination of skills, knowledge, and experience to creatively solve functional and aesthetic problems and meet the needs of the consumer. This is true whether the consumer owns a home or a business facility. It can be argued that no other profession involves as wide a range of technical, aesthetic, planning, and health, safety, and welfare issues as interior design.

## INTERIOR DESIGN REGISTRATION LAWS IN THE UNITED STATES

Alabama	Title and Practice	Minnesota	Title
Arkansas	Title	Missouri	Title
California	Self-certification	Nevada	Title and Practice
Colorado	Interior Design Permitting Statute	New Jersey	Title
Connecticut	Title	New Mexico	Title
Florida	Title and Practice	New York	Title
Georgia	Title	Oklahoma	Title
Illinois	Title	Puerto Rico	Title and Practice
Iowa	Title	Tennessee	Title
Kentucky	Title	Texas	Title
Louisiana	Title and Practice	Virginia	Title
Maine	Title	Washington, D.C.	Title and Practice
Maryland	Title	Wisconsin	Title

### *How Important Is Certification by Examination and Licensing of Interior Designers Today?*

› Passing a qualifying examination and becoming registered or licensed will be the minimum requirements for interior design in the very near future. Nearly half the states in the U.S. and many of the Canadian provinces already have some legislation in place to regulate our profession. Another 10 or so states are currently in the process of getting this type of legislation passed. These two things will become the minimum requirements for those wishing to practice or call themselves “interior designer” in the near future.

*Terri Maurer, FASID*

› As a former regulatory board member and president of NCIDQ, I feel certification by examination and the licensure through the states’ regulatory processes is critical to the protection of the public health, safety, and welfare. This ensures that the public can rely on those individuals with certification and licensure as having obtained a certain standard of education and professional experience.

*Linda Elliott Smith, FASID*

› California licenses interior designers and I think it's very important for the profession.

*Jain Malkin, CID*

› Critical.

*Nila Leiserowitz, FASID*

› I would like to see interior designers certified by examination and licensing of professional qualification to represent the rigorous education that we must have. We need to overcome the image that interior designers are nothing more than furniture salesman by the public.

*Sandra Evans, ASID*

› It becomes more important with each passing year. I believe that in the next couple of decades certification and licensing will become as important and ubiquitous as the CPA (certified public accountant) exam. And because of increased liability related to interior design issues (ADA, mold/air quality, ergonomics, etc.), the general public will begin demanding qualified designers.

*Jeffrey Rausch, IIDA*

› Critical to continued advancement of the profession through regulation of activities undertaken under the heading of “interior design.”

*Marilyn Farrow, FIIDA*

› Very important. As interior designers we work with lighting, building systems, finish materials, and furnishings that affect the people living and working in the spaces we design. We need to show competence in designing and specifying for interiors spaces beyond the pure aesthetics. It is critical to be aware of the safety of a building's structural materials, the furnishings, and the finishes in respect to one's health and life safety.

*Sally Thompson, ASID*

› Monumental—the public needs to understand our profession. Examination and licensure assures the public that we are capable of protecting their health, safety, and welfare.

*Donna Vining, FASID, IIDA, RID, CAPS*

› It is very important to set industry standards that require at least minimum standards of general knowledge. We owe it to ourselves and to our clients.

*Michelle King, IIDA*

› Very important because of the liabilities that exist in offering professional interior design services. A client is paying for professional service and expects the designer to be accountable for the results.

*Leonard Alvarado*

› Immensely.

*Rosalyn Cama, FASID*

› I think certification is vital to the practice of interior design. Until we have certification or legal recognition in all states, we will not have credibility as a professional practice.

*Susan Coleman, FIIDA, FIDEC*

Note: Additional comments are included in Chapter 6.

## ALLIED PROFESSIONS

› The interior designer or client, to provide expertise in specific areas of an interiors project, may hire professionals and consultants in allied fields.

**Architecture:** The profession of designing and supervising the construction of buildings of all types.

**Construction:** General contractors oversee the tradespersons that are needed to build the project. Subcontractors are hired by the general contractor (or owner of the building) to build certain parts of the project such as framing, plumbing, and the electrical components.

**Engineering:** The planning and design of various technical aspects of a building or its interior. Types of engineers that might be involved in an interior project include mechanical, electrical, plumbing, heating and ventilation, and structural engineers.

**Facility planning:** Synonymous with *space planning*. Facility planners often work for client corporations.

**Graphic design:** The design and development of a wide variety of graphic media for print, film, advertising, books, and other areas of commercial art.

**Interior architecture:** Many consider this profession synonymous with interior design; however, state boards of technical registration require that the term *interior architect* be used only by individuals who have graduated from a school of architecture or been certified as an architect.

**Kitchen and bath design:** The specialty design of residential and commercial kitchens and/or baths.

**Lighting design:** The specialty design of artificial and natural lighting treatments to enhance the design and function of an interior or exterior space.

**Space planning:** The planning of interior spaces, especially in commercial facilities. Generally, the space planner has less responsibility for the decorative aspects of the interior than the interior designer.



## A Career Change Challenge

**CHARRISSE JOHNSTON, ASID, LEED-AP, CID  
DESIGNER (SPECIALTY: WORKPLACE/  
OFFICE DESIGN)  
GENSLER  
SANTA MONICA, CALIFORNIA**

*How did you choose which school to attend to obtain your education in interior design?*

› I was impressed by UCLA Extension Interior Design Program's reputation and instructional quality (the instructors are all practicing professionals) and its flexible class schedule suited my needs. I also liked that it's a postbaccalaureate program and that many of the students were also career changers like myself. What sealed the deal was meeting an inspiring woman who had gone through the program while raising a family, passed the NCIDQ, and become the program's student advisor.

*What degrees do you possess?*

› A professional certificate from the UCLA Extension Architecture and Interior Design Program; an M.B.A. from the Columbia Business School with a dual concentration in management and marketing; and a B.A. from Johns Hopkins University in social and behavioral sciences with a concentration in behavioral biology.

*What was your greatest challenge as a student?*

› Balancing school and family life, I attended school in the evenings while raising two young children. Also, gaining the self-confidence that, even though I'd only used quantitative/analytical skills in my past career (marketing research, strategic planning), I could be as effective a designer as my naturally artistic classmates.

*Are you planning to take the NCIDQ exam if you have not already? Why or why not?*

› I sat for the NCIDQ as soon as I qualified to take it. Passing this exam was important to me personally because it validated years of hard work. It's also important to the profession as a whole because it establishes standards for a still-nascent and often misunderstood profession.

*How important do you feel an internship is to a student's educational experience?*

› Absolutely crucial, no matter what type of design firm or how menial the responsibilities. I had an internship at a boutique hospitality firm where I was relegated to receptionist duty. But, during those three months, I met a ton of sales reps, saw all the presentation boards and proposals, and learned firsthand how the business operated. All of this experience proved valuable later.

*How did you choose the firm that you are working for?*

› Gensler is a legendary firm known for its excellence in all regards. While still a student, I'd met one of the managing principals at an industry conference, and she encouraged me to call her when I was ready to look for a job. I was totally floored and figured that if Gensler would take me, I wouldn't bother looking anywhere else. And, fortunately, that's exactly what happened.

*What has been your greatest challenge in your first years of employment?*

› Again, balancing work with family life. I enjoy my job immensely, and I've been lucky to be assigned to some wonderful projects, so it's often difficult for me to stop working and go home. I'm also committed to ASID (I serve on the national Student Advisory Council) and that takes a lot of

time as well. But my kids are great, I work only a mile from home, my office is very family-friendly, and I have a super nanny, so it's worked out very well.

Of course, the other challenge is the low starting salaries. I try not to think about what I'd be making if I'd stayed on Wall Street.

*Did you join the student chapter of ASID or IIDA at your school? Why?*

› My student advisor encouraged me to attend an ASID student chapter meeting because she said it would enrich my education beyond what I was learning in the classroom. One thing led to another and I eventually became a two-term student chapter president.

### Why Did You Become an Interior Designer?

› Interior design was a degree suggested by my high school principal because I was both artistic and academically strong in math and science. My choices at the time were to become an art teacher or an interior designer. Fortunately, my principal was knowledgeable and wise enough to advise my parents that I should pursue a college degree and not be satisfied with a short-term course.

*Carol Morrow, Ph.D., ASID, IIDA, IDEC*

› I liked the hardware store as a kid. While a business major in college, I decided to add fashion merchandising to make it more interesting and had to take a basic design course as well as textiles. I met a few interior students and figured if they could do it, so could I. So I switched majors and have been at it ever since.

*Melinda Sechrist, FASID*

› I care about people and interior design was the most effective way I could personally contribute to society.

*Linda Sorrento, ASID, IIDA, LEED-AP*

› I have always been interested in space and interior environments and grew up drawing and painting and naturally wanted to major in art in college. My college required that I select a specialty, so I selected interior design. I was still able to take art classes while learning a profession where I could find employment.

*Rita Carson Guest, FASID*

› I had always loved reading floor plans, even as a child. I had worked for several developers—one in the architectural department—and had always been interested in space planning. And then the social worker in me also liked the idea of working with people to create living environments that functioned well.

*Jan Bast, FASID, IIDA*

› I always had an interest in art, design, and manipulating interior space. So, when I was researching a post secondary education, it became apparent that interior design would be a good career choice.

*David Hanson, RID, IDC, IIDA*

› As a child, buildings, design, and construction always fascinated me. I learned how to draft when I was 14 years old. It was a natural progression to become an interior designer.

*Kristin King, ASID*

› My passion began as a desire to create better places for people to live and work. I believe that all interior designers share this basic passion. That passion has grown for me to include consideration for how we affect the natural environment in the process. I still focus on interiors, but the choices we make in the process have a significant effect on the larger environment that we all share.

*Barbara Nugent, FASID*

› It was my childhood dream to improve interior environments. I described my desire to my grandfather, and he said I was describing a career in interior design.

*Rosalyn Cama, FASID*

› The creation of place has great impact on people. Great place is both aesthetical and emotional.

*Nila Leiserowitz, FASID, Associate AIA*

› Believe it or not, I'd never heard of interior design as a profession until I was working my husband's way through college at a local university. I worked in the dean's office, where the interior design program was being developed, and the course curriculum came across my desk. I was so impressed with the interdisciplinary approach of the program through art, architecture, interior design, graphic design, and technology that I became interested in pursuing that new major. I found it fascinating that many of the courses focused on various forms of creative problem solving.

*Terri Maurer, FASID*

› I have always been an artist and was a graphic designer in my first career. However, I wanted to translate my design skills from 2D to 3D. I was led into interior design because I was very interested in the perspective/renderings that had been done for presentations. After taking some drafting classes and courses in perspective, I was hooked on creating the whole environment.

*Robin J. Wagner, ASID, IDEC*

› I was working in an architectural firm while in school and saw the potential for rapid advancement in commercial interior design. There was a lack of technical knowledge in the field at that time.

*Fred Messner, IIDA*

› I actually fell into it working for a large design and furnishings firm after high school. I liked it and explored many avenues of industry.

*Michael Thomas, FASID, CAPS*

› Interior design is an extension of my creative nature and the fulfillment of my desire to be of service to persons who endeavor to enrich their lives through their physical environment.

*Sandra Evans, ASID*

› I became an interior designer because it was the closest degree I could find to a fine arts degree that my father would fund. At that time, I was interested in all the art classes; but as I began to take interior design labs, I enjoyed the challenge of interpreting a program combined with the complexity of transferring my ideas into a two- or three-dimensional format.

*Linda Santellanes, ASID*

› I'm a registered architect, not a professional interior designer. I suppose you could say I'm a professional interior architect who has a great deal of experience designing interiors.

*M. Arthur Gensler Jr., FAIA, FIIDA, RIBA*

› I didn't plan to become an interior designer. I started out with a degree in psychology and, later, through a circuitous route, discovered this field. This was way before Art Gensler had created the field of corporate office interiors. Healthcare design in those days didn't even exist. In fact, interior design as we know it was taught in only about three schools across the country. At most universities, it was in the home economics department, which was anything but commercial or institutional interior design. It's actually quite an interesting story how I got into the field, but it would take several paragraphs to even scratch the surface. It was, however, quite fortuitous, as I found I really enjoyed it and it brought together many of my talents and abilities. I always had a good head for business, was persuasive and also creative. Those are important prerequisites for this field, especially if one wants to be self-employed.

*Jain Malkin, CID*

› As a teenager I became interested in spaces, particularly my own personal space, and how, with some thought and manipulation of the elements within the space, that environment could take on a totally different feel.

*Linda E. Smith, FASID*

› I started out wanting to become an architect. Lucky for me, the closest architectural school to me was at the University of Manitoba, Canada (100 km away from my hometown). The program offers a master's in architecture and is regarded very highly. The undergraduate degrees offered are environmental studies (three years) and interior design (four years). I chose the interior design

program. I knew I would have a solid profession to rely on if I did not continue studying for my masters. (The environmental studies program would provide an undergraduate with a very good foundation to proceed into architecture, but it would not provide a solid degree on its own.)

Once I graduated, I gave myself one year to work in the industry before going back to school for my masters. I have been practicing interior design for 15 years and have no intention of obtaining a master's in architecture.

*Jennifer van der Put, BID, IDC, ARIDO, IFMA*

› At first it was because I wanted to fix up my own house. Then others started asking for my interior design advice and urged me to take it up as a profession.

*Greta Guelich, ASID*

› Even during my education as an architect years ago, the initiation and focus of my design process was with the interior spaces and experiences created for people within the spaces. That bent continued on into practice in both architecture and interior design. As a designer, the ability to shape the settings that people live, work, and play within is a huge responsibility and joy.

*Katherine Ankersen, IDEC, NCARB Certified*

› To provide functional, aesthetically pleasing environments for people to live and work.

*Sally Nordahl, IIDA*

› I always knew that I'd be involved with some type of design, but I had to take a number of art and design classes in college to decide which area was a good fit. I was steered into graphic design by a guidance counselor in college who didn't understand our profession at all. But when I took a job in college working with architectural models, I realized that architecture and design were where my true interests lay.

*Suzanne Urban, IIDA, ASID*

Sports arena: Ice Lounge, Jobing.com Arena, Glendale, Arizona. Lisa Slayman, ASID, IIDA, Slayman Design Associates, Inc., Newport Beach, California. Architect: HOK, Kansas City.

PHOTOGRAPH: ENNIS PHOTOGRAPHY



› I have always been intrigued by the built environment and how space, volume, and aesthetics affect our well-being and quality of life.

*Robert Wright, FASID*

› On looking back, I can't say for sure that any one thing swayed me. I always knew that I wanted to be in an artistic profession, yet there was also the mechanical side and the what-makes-it-work, how-was-this-done aspect. I think interior design found me. Once the decision was made, I have never regretted nor doubted the choice.

*Derrell Parker, IIDA*

› I wanted to focus on the effect of environment on personal success.

*Neil Frankel, FIIDA, FAIA*

› The plan has always fascinated me. As a very young child, I drew house plans for fun. And I had a high school art teacher who introduced rural kids to the world of applied art. Everybody assumed a college-bound rural kid would become a teacher

or home economist. I enrolled in the College of Arts and Sciences as an art major. A couple of prearchitecture courses pointed me in the direction of architecture or interior design. Economics and circumstances put me in the interior design masters program at the University of Missouri, Columbia. I have never been sorry. The intimate relationship between an interior and the people who live and work there is fascinating. I truly believe that when an interior works, people live better, work better, learn better, and heal better.

*M. Joy Meeuwig, IIDA*

› I considered interior design a perfect place to blend my artistic abilities with a desire for a professional career.

*Juliana Catlin, FASID*

› My mother told me I could never make money being an artist. I still like to create, and this seemed to be a good avenue for that.

*Debra May Himes, ASID, IIDA*

› I grew up with immigrant parents; my dad was a builder and my mom was a seamstress. It was only natural that I would end up in the building industry, plus a little arm twisting from my parents. From a very young age, I was exposed to residential interiors through my mom's work as a seamstress who provided window treatments, bedding, and pillows to clients. My mother worked for a few interior designers, one who led me to a fantastic, small interior design school in Colorado that was accredited by FIDER (now CIDA). I loved sitting with my dad reading blueprints and going to the construction job sites whenever possible. When I wasn't in the sewing studio helping my mom, I was on the job site with my dad or outside gardening. To this day, I most enjoy problem solving in the field and watching the construction team bring it all together.

*Annette Stelmack, Allied Member ASID*

› I have always loved art and design. When trying to decide how to best put my love of art to use I felt that becoming an interior designer would be the best way for me to share my love and talent with my community. Not only does interior design allow me to use my talents, but it also allows me to create healthier and happier communities for people who live there.

*Shannon Ferguson, IIDA*

› It was a career that would incorporate my interest in science and math and a desire to create. Interior designers at my university were required to have chemistry, biochemistry, and anatomy as it also satisfied prerequisites for textile science.

*Linda Isley, IIDA*

› I became an interior designer after getting a bachelor's degree in fine art and realizing that I enjoy the hands-on and creative nature of the interior design profession. I drew houses as a kid,

rearranged my furniture, and redecorated my room many times. I realized later on what interior designers do and thought that it was the fit for me.

*Laurie Smith, ASID*

› I had the opportunity to go back to college when I was 38. After carefully thinking through my talents and believing my work should be something I loved, I selected a two-year interior design program at the University of California. My husband was serving in the U.S. Navy and we had a three-year tour in Long Beach. I had just enough time before moving again, to complete the program. The state of California was in the midst of interior design legislation at this time, so I began studying for the NCIDQ as I did *not* want to be known as one of the designers who was "grandfathered" in due to this legislation.

*Patricia Rowen, ASID, CAPS*

› My interests and talents in high school included fine arts, math, and music. In looking at career options, architecture came to the forefront. In college I experimented with architecture and fashion design before finding the field of interior design, which seemed like the ideal fit.

*Mary Knopf, ASID*

› As a kid I enjoyed creating floor plans of made-up houses. I have always enjoyed that technical side of design. I guess it came from my mother, who was a seamstress and made bridal gowns without patterns, and my father, who was a tool and die maker. Interior design has always allowed me to help solve the problems of making the interior work for the business. Looking back, it was especially gratifying to work in healthcare and the early days of office systems and help affect the functional working environment of hospitals and office facilities.

*Christine M. Piotrowski, FASID, IIDA*

› I actually enjoyed art and business. I did not think I could make it as an artist and thought business was a bit boring. I grew up around architecture all my life and I think subliminally it just came to me

*Jo Rabaut, ASID, IIDA*

› I started out with a liberal arts degree from Williams College. After school I worked for a time as a carpenter and then became a contractor. I taught myself to draw technical drawings by studying and then copying the drawings that I was given to build from. Then I started my own design/build firm. Then one day I said to myself, “I am tired of pounding nails and cutting wood. I know how to do that now. The design part is what I love.” So I got myself a temporary job drafting at FORMA, the design division of Westin Hotels. I turned that into a permanent position and began to learn the technical rigors of fine interior design. Then I studied for and passed the NCIDQ. Working on the creation of a complete interior environment from start to finish is what really turned me on to interior design. Now that has evolved into the development of complete, branded environments and “experience” planning—the obvious and necessary evolution of developing great interior design, especially in the retail field in which I work.

*Bruce James Brigham, FASID, ISP, IES*

› At the time, 1971, the field of interior design was still “unformed.” I started in a five-year program as a co-op at the University of Cincinnati, which had Bob Stevens as the head of the department. Bob was an architect, and had the vision to create a department that still stands today as the number-one-rated interior design program in the country. I entered because I naively wanted design and art courses. I got so much more, opening up an entire world that I didn’t know existed, gaining

exposure to architecture and design, a world that I had not been exposed to before. I also had the pleasure of doing my early co-ops at Herman Miller in Zeeland, Michigan, in the very early days of Systems Furniture, with designers and innovators on site. What a great experience that was, building on what school was teaching me, and what the industry was about to become. At the time of graduation, interior designers were not generally hired by architectural firms, but that soon changed, and the marriage of the interior and exterior soon became an accepted relationship.

*Colleen McCafferty, IFMA, USGBC, LEED-CI*

› I became an interior designer because it allowed me to express my creativity on a large scale using interactive mediums.

*Darcie Miller, NKBA, ASID Industry Partner, CMG*

› When I was a child, I would always be working on home furnishings projects like refinishing furniture, making accessories and selling them in the local stationery store, and other art projects. When I started college, I told my parents I wanted to be an interior designer and they discouraged me. They felt I needed to have a degree in business because it would lead me to a more successful place in the workforce. During my studies in junior college, I took a couple of interior design classes as electives and did extremely well. The teacher at that time encouraged me to take it further so, at that time, I changed my major. After I completed all my design classes in that school, I transferred to Cal State Long Beach because it had one of the best interior design programs in the country.

*Lisa Slayman, ASID, IIDA*

› I enjoy the diversity. Interior design is not dull. You meet fascinating people and work with beautiful items to create an environment that affects people’s lives every day.

*Susan Norman, IIDA*

› I wanted to do something with my artistic talents. I took an elective drawing class my first year in college. I was not even thinking of an interior design major. We did perspective drawings, and I was immediately hooked on the caring of interior space and plane through drawing. I began the architecture program the next semester.

*Maryanne Hewitt, IIDA*

› I was always interested in technical drawing and watching my civil engineering father draft. An art teacher in junior and senior high school encouraged that drawing talent and helped me look at architecture schools. In college a professor helped me “see the light” and realize that interior design was where my passion lay. The rest, as they say, is history.

*David Stone, IIDA, LEED-AP*

› I have always had a passion for art, design, and architecture. I wanted to do something creative, but have a job that has many directions.

*Jane Coit, Associate Member IIDA*

› My interest in interior design is broad and comprehensive in scope, but the basis for doing interior design is to make a difference—to make a better world through design.

An attraction of interior design is the brief time span for design ideas to be realized. Most interior projects are conceived and completed within a year, whereas buildings and urban development can take years to complete. Interiors are relatively quick to complete and the satisfaction that results from each project is rewarding.

The primary attraction of the profession is the opportunity to compose and resolve space—down to the details.

In my career as both an educator and practitioner, my central aim has been to better understand the potency and conceptual basis of interior design. For the past 20 years, I have taught interior design students and have worked to develop my design practice. Teaching and practicing are codependent, and in part I became an interior designer because of my love for teaching. I became a teacher for my love of designing.

*James Postell, Associate Professor,  
University of Cincinnati*

› When I was in junior high, my older sister called from her college dorm to tell me there was a career for me: interior design. Since I can remember, I’ve been discovered sneaking around parents’ friends’ houses fascinated at how people use their space. I built dream homes out of blocks for our toy figures, and drew floor plans on notepaper, perplexed at how to put it to scale. In high school I determined that architecture was the more manly profession, and entered a drafting course. Bored out of my mind drawing screws and basic house elevations, I realized my penchant for personal details when a classmate broke my focus, noting the classic paneled door, the window shutters, flower boxes, shrubbery, brick detailing, etcetera. I enrolled in the Interior Design Program at the University of Kentucky and, for the first time in my entire educational career, I felt like I was learning skills that would lead me to my own calling.

I love art and beauty and all their natural and created expressions, but I really love putting those expressions to practical use in environments where people live.

*Keith Miller, ASID*



› I became an interior designer to bridge together my diverse interests and strengths. I enjoy working with people, I am interested in how your surroundings influence your work, I feel compelled and drawn to the creative process, I enjoy numbers and budgets. Finally, I am both a detail-oriented person and a big-picture thinker. As a child I always wanted to be an architect. But after learning more about interior design while completing my first degree in accounting, I felt certain that the emphasis of human interaction within a space versus just the form or function made interior design the better choice.

*Laura Busse, IIDA, KYCID*

› I have always seen my career path as leading toward designing creative solutions. I, as many others, switched professions midlife from a product design and production industry for the mass market to that of interior design in order to work more independently on unique projects designed directly for the individual end user. I was drawn to interior design as a more entrepreneur-friendly field that has the advantage of affording both small and large firms the ability to compete successfully. An interior designer can also balance the time spent on business activities with cycles of intense creativity.

*Sally D' Angelo, ASID, AIA Affiliate*

› I couldn't imagine *not* being an interior designer. I think the idea of being able to improve someone's life by improving their surroundings is very powerful.

*Lindsay Sholdar, ASID*

› I became a designer because it is a unique way to connect the world of visual arts to the world of business.

*Lisa Henry, ASID*

› I "fell" into the career in high school when I took an interior design class. I love the creative yet practical side of the profession. I enjoy the technical aspects of the career (e.g., lighting and computers) as well as the application of psychology and understanding of human behavior. I appreciate how the field must adapt to changing trends yet clearly support the trends that are here to stay (e.g., universal and sustainable design). I love the design process and helping others develop meaningful spaces. It is, and always will be for me, a very fulfilling career.

*Stephanie Clemons, Ph.D., FASID, FIDEC*

› As a young girl, I remember how much I loved to rearrange my bedroom furniture. My mother would take me to the fabric store to select patterns and fabrics for new clothes. I credit her for my ability to visualize. As a teenager I loved the high-style world of fashion design. Dissatisfied with the clothing choices available, I learned to sew and made most of my wardrobe during high school, which provided an excellent education in the knowledge of fabrics. That education continued when I learned to fabricate window treatments, bedding, etcetera for my own residence. I was in my mid-30s when I went back to school to pursue a lifelong love of design.

*Teresa Ridlon, Allied Member ASID*

› Ever since I could hold a pencil I have been drawing floor plans—others "doodled" and I drew plans. Architecture and interiors have always fascinated me, and so it was really inevitable that I would go into interior design. The interest was encouraged by my parents, as we were forever touring homes that were being built as I grew up, and our own home was remodeled several times and redesigned, with the help of an architect and interior designer, both of whom were more than happy to answer my questions and share advice as I grew up.

*Drue Lawlor, FASID*



Private residence: living room.  
Robin Wagner, ASID, IDEC, Wagner-  
Somerset Designs, Clifton, Virginia.

PHOTOGRAPH: ROBIN WAGNER

› I found a paper I wrote in about fifth grade listing that as my goal. I remember drawing floor plans of homes at that age—with designs that I still wish could be realized today.

*Sharmin Pool-Bak, ASID, CAPS, LEED-AP*

› I will give you the long version. This is the story I share with eighth-graders who are interested in interior design:

I grew up the daughter of an architect and engineer. My father designed our house and had it built in 1966. My parents always gave me great freedom in decorating my room—from painting in whatever color I wanted to allowing me to hang whatever I wanted on the walls. When I was in the seventh grade, I really wanted a loft. The ceilings in our contemporary house were very high. My father said if I drew a plan of what I wanted, he would build it. So I had this wonderful loft space in my room with my mattress up high. It was very cool for a 12-year-old.

I was in high school and not sure what I should study in college. I loved arts and crafts projects, but didn't take art in high school. However, I did take mechanical drafting, and in

the summer I worked a little bit in my father's office drafting elevations and floor plans. When I was in high school, I had a science teacher who said I should study forest engineering because it was a field with few women in it and I would make a lot of money. Sounded good to a 17-year-old—tromping around in the woods with a bunch of guys. I entered the University of Maine at Orono and promptly flunked out after one semester. While I was in Orono, however, I decorated my dorm room and won an honorable mention prize for my room. That prize got me to thinking that maybe I could make a living doing what I'd always enjoyed so much, so I entered Bauder College in Atlanta, Georgia, and received an AA in interior design in 1983. I graduated top of my class—proving that once I knew what I wanted to do I could excel at it.

I worked for an office furniture dealer (Herman Miller) for three years. Then, in 1986, when I asked for a raise (I was making \$12,000) and was turned down, I decided to start my own company. At the age of 23, I started Lisa Whited Planning and Design, Inc. I kept the company until 2001.

In 1988, realizing I really needed to add to my design education, I entered the Boston Architectural Center, studying architecture. I studied for three years, commuting from Portland, Maine, to Boston (two hours each way) two nights per week. I did not get my degree—but the additional education was invaluable. I also took classes over the years at the Maine College of Art (color theory, etcetera). In 2000, still wanting to add to my education, I entered Antioch New England Graduate School and gained an MS in Organization and Management, graduating in fall 2002.

*Lisa Whited, IIDA, ASID, IDEC*

› I love buildings, the exterior blending with the interior, and bringing them together in a harmonious manner to create a special place to live, entertain your friends and family, work, and, especially, relax.

*Kristen Anderson, ASID, CID, RID*

› At the time I started interior design school in 1981, I was a 30-year-old wife and mother working in a furniture business that my husband and I owned. I was good at helping the customers and thought it would be logical to finish my college degree in interior design rather than in journalism (which is what I was majoring in in the 1960s when I dropped out to get married, as many women did in those days).

As it happened, the FIDER-accredited program at the University of Missouri was powerful. I soon came to understand the true impact designers can have on environments and, therefore, on people (and I'm a people person). I loved every aspect of my education, but I especially loved the people part—the design and behavior classes; the books *Designing Places for People*, *A Pattern Language*, *Humanscape*, *Environments for People* and *Human Dimension for Interior Space*—even the ergonomics part interested me. (Weird, huh?)

Now my life has taken many turns away from the plans I had when I was 30. But I love my work—I love being a professional designer.

*Linda Kress, ASID*

› It was an evolution from birth. I was always drawing, painting, coloring, and making things with my hands. I had a lot of exposure to all types of design, but it was the college program that helped me focus on interior design.

*Susan Coleman, FIIDA, FIDEC*

› By growing up in Japan, I realized that life experiences shape who we are. Everything about my living environment—region, culture, interior dwellings, and so on—influenced the development of my character and how I feel about myself and living. In high school, I specifically realized that I wanted to influence others because I knew well how our environment can affect our motivation and zest for life. I decided to do this through interior design, where I could develop interior environments that enhance motivation and positive experiences for others.

*Susan B. Higbee*

› I have always been interested in art and architecture and decided to focus on the interior environment when I became familiar with this field in college.

*Janice Carleen Linster, ASID, IIDA, CID*

› After reaching a previous career goal as a journalist early in life, I decided the only thing left to do was to write a book and quickly realized I didn't know much about anything other than journalism. I thought I should pursue another interest for the subject of the book and went back to college to study interior design. College led to practicing.

*Suzan Globus, FASID, LEED-AP*

› As a child, I was influenced by my mother and grandmother. Growing up in Miami, I spent a lot of time watching them renovate homes and boats. It was then I realized I could mentally visualize a space in three dimensions. Interior design just seemed to be the natural direction for me.

*Sally Thompson, ASID*

› From a young age, I was always interested in design. I enjoyed art classes and visiting art museums with my parents. I would spend hours with large sheets of paper, drawing entire cities with buildings, houses, and roads. My cities were perfect places to race my matchbox cars. I enjoyed creating my own little world with Lincoln Logs and Legos. My Barbies always had the best-laid-out townhouse on the block. When asked what I wanted to be when I grew up, I would always answer, “an architect.” I don’t think I really knew what that meant, only that it had something to do with creating the built environment.

I took all the design and drafting classes I could in high school. I was fortunate to have the opportunity to participate in the Georgia Governor’s Honors program in Design. My type of artistic talent—more technically oriented—seemed to be the perfect match for architectural design. I entered college determined to get into the School of Architecture and study interior design.

*Kristi Barker, CID*

› I want a career that utilizes both my technical capabilities and creative talents. Interior design is about balancing what is physical and tangible with aesthetic ideals. To me, form and function should be a happy marriage. I also enjoy having new challenges on a regular basis. Each new project offers a chance to approach things differently, to solve a new problem.

*Kimberly M. Studzinski, ASID*

› In 1997, I graduated from Carnegie Mellon University with a Bachelor of Architecture degree. I decided I wanted to work in a more detail-oriented field, so I took a position at a firm that practiced architecture but had interior design as its specialty.

*Derek Schmidt*

› In high school, I was fascinated by the way a building’s energy was embedded in its structure. I considered studying architecture, but at that time women were not encouraged to be architects, and I entered a liberal arts program instead. After graduation, I took a series of aptitude tests, and architecture looked like the best career choice, so I enrolled at the Boston Architectural Center. After two and a half years of going to school nights and working days at anything I could get related to architecture, I burned out on school but continued to work. A recession and a move to Denver took me into retail management and human services work. In 1988 I moved back to Boston and got a job with an architect. A vocational counselor advised that, because I loved color and texture and was most interested in how people experienced and used interior spaces, I might study interior design. So back I went to the BAC’s interior design program.

*Corky Binggeli, ASID*

› My dad was a contractor and as a kid I worked with him on some of his projects. I thought of becoming an architect but lacked the discipline to study, especially math, while I was in college. I was much more interested in following sports and finding a husband than getting an education. I ended up with an education and married later in my career.

*Mary Fisher Knott, CID, RSPI, Allied Member ASID*

› I had wanted to be involved in the built environment since I was four or five. Of all the things going on, the workers and their tasks fascinated me the most. Being raised in a rural community, I did not encounter much emphasis on the design professions, but I took as many

courses as I could that would prepare me for a career in architecture. I say *architecture* because I had no idea that interior design was a profession unto itself. In college I was exposed to the profession of interior design as a career option. When the possibility of a career path in interior design became clear, my academic life became much more exciting, engaging me in a much more passionate manner. After many years working in small architecture firms and then in the interiors group of a large AE (architectural-engineering) firm, I obtained a master's degree and pursued a career in design education. Choosing the education path has allowed me to continue to be a part of the design profession and to give back something to this profession that has provided me such a satisfying career.

**Robert J. Krikac, IDEC**

› My dad and brother are both in the construction business, so I grew up around a construction environment. On top of that, drawing has always been a talent that comes naturally to me. Design is the best mesh of things that I am comfortable with, enjoy, and can earn a living with. I was actually a pre-vet major for two years before design. I switched after realizing it was not stimulating or creative enough for me, so I made the commitment to take on the additional four years of design school. It was certainly worth it.

**Alexis B. Bounds, Allied Member ASID**

› I became an interior designer because of my love of the art field. What blossomed from that was a deep appreciation for the way an interior affects its inhabitants.

**Carolyn Ann Ames, Allied Member ASID**

› Interior design captures all of my interests—art, business, and science—in one profession. Every day I get to exercise a whole range of skills, so I'm never bored.

**Charisse Johnston, ASID, LEED-AP, CID**

› Because I enjoy working with others and creating beautiful solutions.

**Chris Socci, Allied Member ASID**

› I became an interior designer because I have always been intrigued by architecture and the indoor environments. I always knew I wanted to work in a profession that would allow me to explore both creativity and logic. Once I got in to design school, I soon appreciated and understood the fact that interior designers affect the health, safety, and welfare of the public and users of a space; therefore being able to positively influence an end user through design made this profession even more appealing to me.

**Shannon Mitchener, LEED-AP, Allied Member ASID, Associate IIDA**

## NOTES

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