

Local designer wins national award

By Corinne Abatt
staff writer

A.S.I.D., received her national interior design award in Chicago this fall, she felt like an academy award winner.

There she was before a huge black tie crowd in Chicago accepting the award on behalf of her associates, her parents, herself and Detroit.



Susan Winton-Feinberg, Bloomfield Hills resident, affiliated with Walter Herz Interiors Inc. of Southfield, is a strong booster of metropolitan Detroit.

MINDY SAUNDERS/staff photographer

The applause at the mention of Detroit was particularly pleasing. She was born in Detroit in 1943, only child of Flora and Frank Winton, has worked here all of her interior design career and is one of the metropolitan area's strongest boosters. To have its importance in the interior design field recognized was heartwarming.

Five 1983 awards for Residential Design Excellence were given by Chicago Design Source. The other four winners were Bebe Winkler, and John F. Saladino of New York City, Bruce Gregga, Chicago and Kalef Alston, Los Angeles.

"I am the only one who doesn't have my own studio," said Winton-Feinberg, who has been associated with Walter Herz Interiors of Southfield for 17 years. She said she and Margaret H. Demant, owner of the firm, do most of the buying.

Winton-Feinberg has only been with one other firm. When she was a student, she worked summers for Edward Navin Burke who founded Modern Studio in Detroit. After completing her bachelor of fine arts at Syracuse University, she became Navin's assistant for several years.

WINTON-Feinberg was nominated for the award by Crane Wallcovering. She and 50 other designers were selected and asked to submit resumes and portfolios. From these 10 semifinalists were chosen, a group she describes as "the biggest names in the country," and from these the five winners were selected.

Lester Dundee, publisher of Interior Design Magazine made the awards.

Half in jest and half seriously her friends and clients claim that now that she has achieved national recognition her fees will change.

"That's not so," she said almost defensively. "My prices didn't go up. How could they? The price of a piece of furniture is still the same as it was before," adding that her commission percentage remains the same as it has always been. In the 17 years she has been with Walter Herz Interiors she has done both commercial and residential work all over the country.

"I did Hatties' five shops and I am now working on the corporate offices at the 555 Building (Birmingham)."

At the same time she is doing a number of other commissions among them a 13,000 square foot house "in Persian."

In this instance, her minor in art history came in handy as she did research for this challenging project.

"I designed an entire line of furniture (for the Persian interior) and we're making it all in the studio."

PAUSING for a moment to explain that the Persian atmosphere won't be as much recreated as it will be an adaptation for today's world, she added, "I do everything — contemporary, stark, plush, antique, country, traditional, period."

"My philosophy is that there are no two families that live alike or have the same lifestyle. Therefore, their homes can't look alike. I am fitting the client's personality (to the design), not mine. I talk with them. I listen to them."

"All of my work has a level of sophistication, but with each client I interpret to my best ability what they tell me they want."

"I like to work with color. I'm known for color. An unusual color scheme doesn't cost a dollar more."

"I try to deal with everything with logic. I will never come up with an idea just because it's beautiful."

She said she works with many men

and she finds they respond positively to logic and logical explanations for choices.

"I try to get my clients involved as much as possible. I try to get tremendous feedback from my clients."

Interestingly, Winton-Feinberg said that while she has grown in her design skills, so have her clients and metropolitan area residents.

"Detroiters have become much more aware of the interior of their homes in the last five years. Now, they want to be with it. They entertain more at home. They are willing to be less safe. They are willing to take a chance."

The successes she has had, the many clients who have become good friends make "the long hours, the frustration, pain pressure and lack of sleep all worth it."

Then, she said with a rare, but winning smile, "Not only do they pay the bill, they kiss me afterwards."

Winton-Feinberg said there was hardly a moment in her life when she wasn't heading for the interior design field.

She grew up in a family of high achievers. Her mother, Flora Winton, is the first woman president of a major Jewish congregation (Temple Beth Ed) in 137 years. Her father, Frank, is an attorney and land developer who is now branching out into the catering business.

"I always dabbled in art as a child. My grandmother was a painter and I was around her a lot. ... My mother decided I would become an interior designer. I became an interior designer because of my mother."

She said her mother chose interior design over art because she felt it was a more marketable skill with a better income.

Village Club class registration opens

Registration for the Village Club winter-spring semester will be open to the public from 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. on Tuesday, Jan. 10. The Village Club is offering a colorful palette of intellectual and artistic pursuits that will allow students to listen and learn, or to learn and create.

Popular old friends include Michael Farrell and art, Marilyn Maddox and bridge, Dr. John P. Cutts and literature and creative writing, Karen Street and exercise and Ricky Dove and ballroom dancing.

"History in the Making," an exclusive yearly lecture series, will explore India, Bangladesh and Pakistan with professors from the University of Michigan and Oakland University faculties dealing with this crowded, troubled and important part of our world.

Two more favorites are Marilyn Semack, who again will teach her vibrant success secrets, and Dale N. Epper, who will offer his "Lure of Genes," which is now expanded into a five-week course in answer to his pupils' demand.

In addition the schedule will offer Patti Jensen's fabric fusing and padded window frames classes, and an A.S.I.D. class for those interested in the latest in residential interior design.

"ECONOMIC UPDATE" will be taught by Alice C. Gorlin. A more advanced financial strategies program will be presented, and a course in "Today's Computers" has been arranged by the classes committee.

Three new subjects will focus on basic genealogy, handwriting analysis, and calligraphy, in "Chic Tree Chic"

well-known fashion consultant Emily K. Murphy will show students how to achieve a truly elegant look.

Let gentlemen feel left out, Thom Leffer, a local haberdasher and stylist, will offer tips for shoppers on dressing for work and play. Practical-minded students will be offered classes in parliamentary procedure and a repeat class of American Red Cross cardiopulmonary resuscitation.

THE VILLAGE Club will offer the services of three celebrity chefs. Executive chef Jimmy Schmidt from the London Chop House will instruct on Feb. 7. Heinz Mengeser from the Lark will be the celebrity chef on Feb. 14; and Chef Jeff Baldwin from Van Dyke Place will appear on Feb. 21.

In addition, Ardis Kenealy Phardel

will share her own specialty, Italian cuisine, on Feb. 9. Barbara Graham will instruct herb cooking on May 3. Other old and trusted friends appearing in the kitchen include Joan Toole, Kay Huberty, Judy Antishin and chefs Randy Firestone and Mark Mazany of The Village Club.

In the arts and crafts department, there are classes in painting, sculpture and weaving, basketry, and knitting and needlework, including a timely stitched Valentine box. Students will learn to make a fragrant herb wreath and more about herbs in the process. "Necklaces Revisited II" is designed to be just plain fun.

The club will also offer a valuable new course in landscaping taught by columnist Betty Frankel, who will help with future garden planning.



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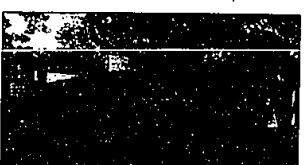
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