

# Home economics leads to interior design career

By KATE GILDERDALE  
Interior designer Lynda Giles credits her parents' foresight in setting her path to a stimulating career.  
It's a career she has successfully tailored to meet the needs of her family and her growing involvement in the cultural life of Whitchurch-Stouffville.  
"I was always interested in home economics and although I got a lot of academic awards, I didn't want to limit myself to teaching," Lynda says. "My parents suggested I should try interior design."  
At that time, very little training was available in Canada, so she turned her attention south of the border.  
"I had read about the Art Institute of Pittsburgh, so we decided to go and see it," she recalls.  
It turned out to be just what she

was looking for.  
"It was a wonderful experience to go to school in another country," she asserts.  
Lynda also gained insight into the uncertainties of life for her fellow students, some of whom were expecting to be called to fight in Viet Nam.  
Despite her enthusiasm for the institute and the country, she had always planned to return to Canada eventually.  
"I never considered moving to the States or becoming an American," she declares.  
After graduating in 1966, Lynda remained in the U.S. for 10 months, working with a company of commercial designers and gaining valuable practical experience.  
She had several interviews in Canada, including one at George Jensen on Bloor Street in Toronto



LYNDA GILES  
Loves design

where she was offered a job. But when she took her portfolio to a firm of architects, "miles away," at Victoria Park and Lawrence Avenues, she had found what she

really wanted.  
"I wanted to be in design, not working in a store with design," Lynda explains. She joined the company in the spring of 1967.  
Working with an architectural firm was the challenge she needed.  
"By then architects were accepting designers as part of their team, so I arrived at a really good time."  
The company was involved in commercial work including hospitals, open concept schools and retirement homes. Lynda's job took her as far away as Saint John, New Brunswick, where she worked on a branch of the Bank of Montreal.  
She was also involved in work on the old Bank of Montreal building at Bay and King Streets, which has now been demolished.  
By then, interior design was

getting firmly established in Canada. When the Association of Interior Designers of Ontario was created five years ago, the industry was able to set standards and provide assistance to members.  
"You have to have a certain level of education and experience to be accepted by the association," Lynda notes. "It's like getting a Chartered Accountancy."  
The association also provides consumer protection from untrained operators, who often charge as much as qualified designers.  
In 1973 Lynda left the company to freelance, a move she has never regretted and an ideal solution to the problems of child care for her growing family.  
With a constant supply of assignments, she has found the pleasures of being her own boss

far outweigh concerns about job security.  
"Connections I have made over the years are still there," she points out.  
Referrals are also an important element, as are the developers and contractors she deals with on a regular basis.  
"We work as a team," Lynda states. "And that's critical. If you have a good rapport with your customers, you will never lose them. They'll always come back when something new comes up."  
Working with competent professionals is also crucial, and again Lynda enjoys excellent relationships with cabinet-makers, flooring specialists and other skilled people.  
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Please see C-8

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