

# Chapter Profile: Alabama Chapter

March 3, 2010



Recently, we spent time with **Carmen Preston, IIDA**, President of the **Alabama Chapter**, to learn more about what's going on in her Chapter.

**DesignMatters:** How do you ensure working well together as a board?

**Carmen Preston:** We understand that to work well as a board, the board must be a cohesive unit. I believe the biggest strength of our board is its collaborative character. Some of our most successful events started out as a small idea at a board meeting. By listening to each other's ideas, we were able to build on these small ideas, and make them a reality. Attentive listening to each board member, and working collaboratively on various ideas is how the Alabama Chapter ensures the board works well together.

**DM:** What are you most proud of?

**CP:** We as a board are very proud of the community service we have provided so far this year. The Chapter has had the opportunity to work with several local and national charitable organizations. Due to the current state of the economy, we felt it necessary to try and give back to our community. We have had the opportunity to work with Habitat for Humanity, Jessie's Place (a local women's shelter), and the Ronald McDonald House. It was amazing to see how our Chapter was able to come together during this great time of need. The benefit of our community service was two-fold: it provided the Alabama Chapter the opportunity to promote IIDA (through local news casts documenting our work), and also allowed us to show the community who we are and what we stand for as interior designers.

**DM:** What's the composition of the Chapter?

**CP:** Our Chapter consists mainly of commercial interior designers and student Members who will ultimately pursue a career in commercial interior design.

**DM:** Do you have any particular goals for 2010 that you can share with us?

**CP:** We plan to continue extending our coverage throughout the state of Alabama. We are hoping to establish city centers in Mobile and Montgomery Alabama. We are also in the process of revamping our website, which will launch in the early summer 2010. Also, one of our main goals is to increase Member satisfaction by creating more programs that reach out to all Membership levels.



**DM:** What is your favorite Chapter event of the year?



**CP:** My favorite chapter event is “Artrageous.” “Artrageous” is an art auction that the Chapter holds every year to benefit the IIDA Foundation. The auction was designed to showcase talent of designers, architects, and manufacturers representatives within our design community. We also extend invitations to local artists to donate art. The event consists of a silent auction and live auction. Each year the show gets bigger, the art gets better, and the design community gives more generously than the year before to the IIDA Foundation.

**DM:** What three words would you use to describe the Alabama Chapter?

**CP:** Collaborative, Focused, and Giving

**DM:** Just for fun, what are three things that Carmen Preston can’t live without?

**CP:** My husband, good wine, and ice cream (pralines & cream 😊)



**80's Skating Party, August 2009**