



Designing Woman

By MaryAnne Scheuble

The Winning Conversation Area!

It was a given that our first house would have a spacious kitchen with nearby seating. Being young, we believed that good food, comfortable seating and great conversation were the draw. We considered it a "seal of approval" when visitors stayed for five hours or more.

Reflecting on the many wonderful gatherings, I realized that it wasn't the size of the house or my recipes but the "size" of the hospitality and comfort that truly welcomed and honored our guests. Gathered together – we heard "Tales of the Wild West" from an aunt who spent her 1920's childhood in South Dakota; we discussed my sainted grandmother's patience dealing with her 11 children; we laughed about a friend's somewhat illicit but wildly humorous college exploits. Best of all, we talked with our boys about their daily discoveries.

An environment imbued with welcoming ambiance is the perfect place for great conversations.

You might imagine that as each entry arrived our excitement grew! Our panel of four judges evaluated the designs, the contributor's comments and compared best elements. Entries mirrored what I found in my travels – there's a lot of great design out there!

The first *Interior Design Award for Best Conversation Area* goes to a newly-built funeral home. Three other entries earned Honorable Mentions for great conversation areas where two or more people could easily visit, console each other or share memories of a happier time.

Read on to see why the following were selected as winners. Psssst. Look to borrow some ideas from your peers!



WINNER: Baker-Stevens-Parramore Funeral Home, Middletown, Ohio

Pam Parramore, manager: "In our new building the foyer houses a spacious seating area and truly welcomes as you enter the front door." Our judges loved the bright, open design which speaks of a new trend for funeral homes. We applaud the relaxed seating which allows for paired or group conversations. An ottoman is a smart design element as it serves as seating, or a coffee table, or can create "breathing" space between guests. The versatility of design won our votes!

Honorable Mention for Most Thoughtful Design: Gallop Funeral Services, Inc., Nags Head, NC

Courtney Gallop, founder and **J. Ben Andrews**, partner: "As a small independent business we were challenged with adapting the interior of an older building. Many of the selections were purchased and rehabilitated from a local drug addiction ministry thrift store. We are proud that funds were spent locally and returned to a charitable resource in our community." The good feelings behind this design warmed our hearts. Who wouldn't feel comforted by the intimate space so thoughtfully planned?

**Honorable Mention for Most Gracious Hospitality Space:
Calloway-Jones Funeral & Cremation Centers, Bryan, TX**
Cody Jones, owner credits his wife, Chelsea Jones for her design vision. "We didn't want our guests to feel as if they are in a funeral home. Notice the high ceilings, big windows and

light paint. We like to say that we designed our entire facility to help your family smile again." Our judges were impressed by the natural elements of warm woods, stone floors and daylight. Live plants throughout added to the charm. We could envision this room hosting some long-lasting conversations.

Honorable Mention for Modern Update: Flanner Buchanan - Oaklawn Memorial Gardens, Indianapolis, IN

Bruce Buchanan, fourth-generation owner, always mindful of tradition and elegance, likes a modern touch. "We designed this location with clean, modern lines, large windows and intimate sitting areas for personal interactions. Our goal is to encourage visitors to linger and talk. We want life celebrations to be inspirational, meaningful and memorable." We judges were impressed that this crisp, clean area bathed in light is free from distractions and welcomes guests to focus on conversation.

Thanks to all who submitted entries. The visible pride in each design speaks of thoughtful planning as well as hard work. It was heartening to see such gracious examples of "customer service". And don't wait until the next contest to share your great design ideas. We always welcome winners!

See Page A24 to view the Honorable Mentions for the Interior Design Award for Best Conversation Area.

MaryAnne Scheuble, graduate of Wheeling Jesuit University, is the Hekman furniture specialist to the memorial industry. Her design experience began in the fabric industry which served as a great basis for the transition to Interior Decorator with Ethan Allen in Pittsburgh, PA. After 5 years in the education field, she began her career with Cressy Memorial Group. For more than 10 years she has worked with funeral and cemetery business owners, managers and marketing directors as well as interior decorators. Her credits include presenter at ICCFA, two-time speaker at OFDA, author of articles for *The Independent*, *ICCFA Magazine*, and regular columnist for *Funeral Home & Cemetery News*. A proud mother of two sons who are best friends, she currently resides Mishawaka, IN. Contact MaryAnne by email at MaryAnne@cressymemorial.com or call 866-763-0485.

Blogs Funeral Home & Cemetery News Contributors share insights and exchange ideas.
www.nomispublications.com

The Designing Woman Interior Design Awards: Honorable Mentions



**Honorable Mention for Most Thoughtful Design:
Gallop Funeral Services, Inc., Nags Head, NC**



**Honorable Mention for Most Gracious Hospitality Space:
Calloway-Jones Funeral and Cremation Centers, Bryan, TX**



**Honorable Mention for Modern Update:
Flanner Buchanan - Oaklawn Memorial Gardens, Indianapolis, IN**

Please see Page A20 for the winning entry, along with detailed descriptions from all of the Honorable Mentions.