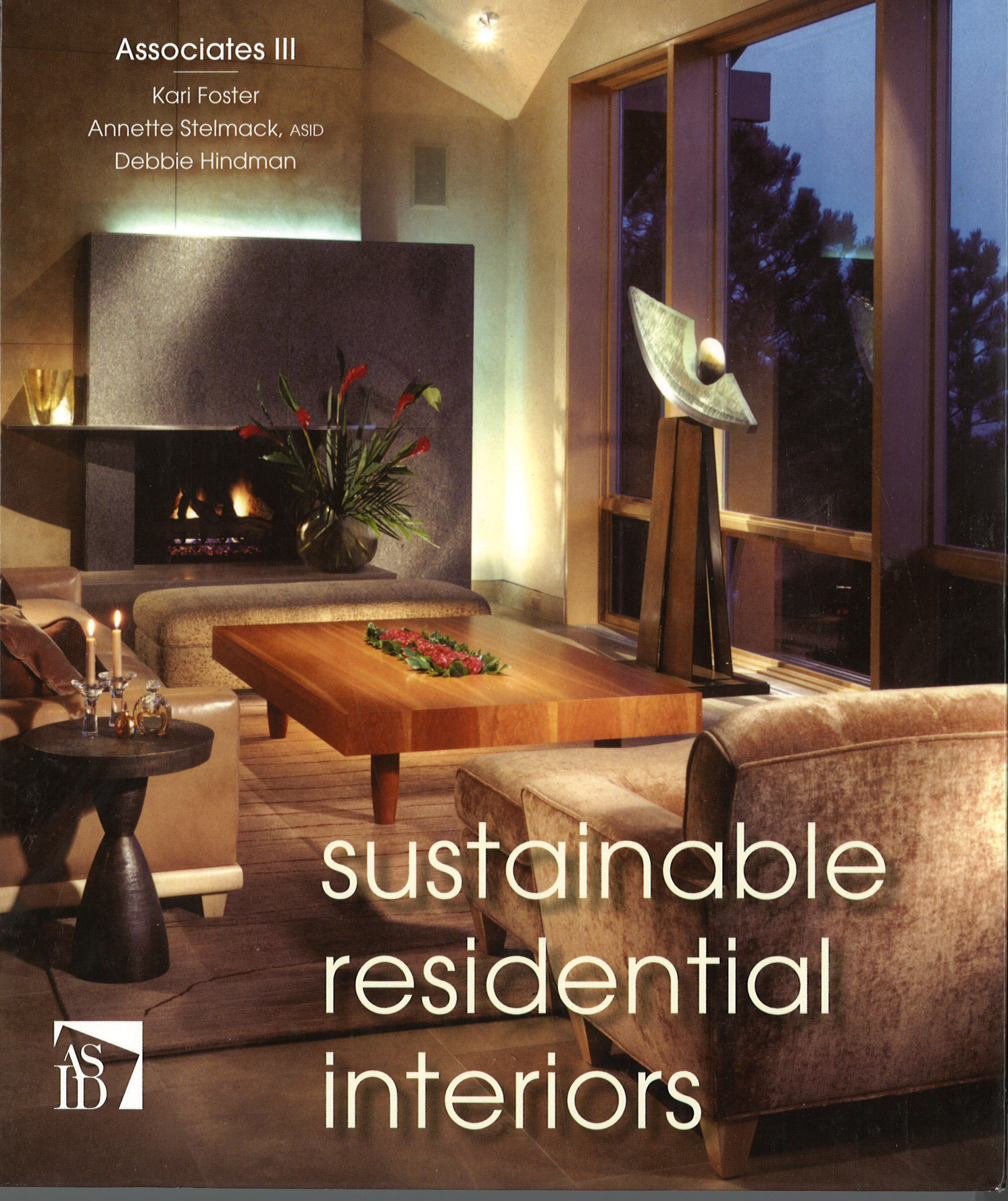


## Associates III

Kari Foster

Annette Stelmack, ASID

Debbie Hindman

A photograph of a modern living room interior. The room features a large, dark fireplace with a fire burning inside. To the right, a large window looks out onto a dark, wooded area. In the center, a low, wide wooden coffee table holds a small arrangement of red flowers. A contemporary sculpture stands near the window. The room is furnished with a leather sofa and a textured armchair. The lighting is warm and ambient, highlighting the textures and materials of the furniture and decor.

sustainable  
residential  
interiors



Montana. Now I can see the value of speaking and brainstorming in person with designers, engineers, and architects. When businesses ask Biomimicry Guild biologists to come to the design table, something very new is happening. We're exploring what's possible for us as a species by looking at what other species have already learned.

Designers are some of my favorite people. I love good design. I didn't know what it was, but I knew I loved things that work well. I always have. And that's what I look for in the natural world—things that work well over the long haul, for both the organism and the ecosystem. This new career, called "Biologist at the Design Table," gives biologists a chance to share the best practices of those communities. Every week more people are calling, asking if they can get involved in bioinspired design. I tell them, 'This is not mine; it is ours.' Collaboration is a key.

So we're doing a lot of teaching these days. Dayna Baumeister, my partner in the Biomimicry Guild, conducts workshops where innovators get to practice bioinspired design in places like Costa Rica and Montana. Millions of great ideas right outside the door! The people who come to these workshops in turn inspire me everyday.

Writing *Biomimicry* changed my path, and my story is still unfolding and evolving. So is the story of our species. If we really start to see nature as a teacher, a wise mentor, it will change our relationship with the natural world. As apprentices, we'll come to admire and respect the organisms that teach us. I believe the words of Bab Dioum, a Senegalese conservationist, 'In the end we will conserve only what we love. We will love only what we understand. We will understand only what we are taught.'"

## Trudy Dujardin: What Brought Me Here?

*Trudy Dujardin, ASID, president of Dujardin Design Associates in Greenwich, Connecticut, and Nantucket, Massachusetts, is an award-winning designer and national expert on nontoxic building materials and sustainable design.*

"THIS IS VERY MUCH MY PERSONAL STORY, MY OWN QUEST FOR HEALTH, meaning, and the inner peace that comes from 'doing the right thing,' whatever that might mean to you.

As a child, I lived on a farm in South Carolina and was continually exposed to pesticides and crop dusting. I was the first and long-awaited grandchild and very treasured. At night, my grandparents would give me the best place to sleep, on a cot by a bank of windows to get the cool evening breeze. To protect me from the mosquitoes, they would spray the window screens with a Flitgun, filled with a DDT solution. Even as a child, I knew something was terribly wrong with this. Since I could barely stand

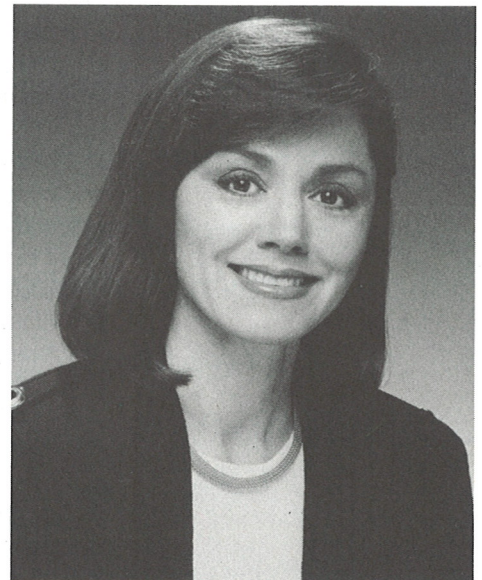


Photo courtesy of Trudy Dujardin.

the smell, I would try to hold my breath and keep my hands over my nose and mouth all night. So, unknowingly, my quest for health began.

As an adult, I spent more than 20 years on construction sites, where I saw little or no attention paid to the toxicity of materials used, or concern for the health of the tradesmen. So in 1987, when I purchased land on the harbor of Nantucket Island, overlooking the town itself, I made a solemn vow to do this project 'right.' Right meant that since this was such a delicate site within a very fragile ecosystem, it was critical that anything done on it had to be 'mindful' and with intention—that is, non-toxic. I was determined not to add to the pollution in any way with runoff from my construction process.

So, my passion for green design came out of a desire for harmony in myself and with the environment of this beautiful island. Nantucket Island is a world unto itself. It made sense to me to have as little impact as possible. It also made sense that the building to be constructed should be healthy for the occupants and the construction workers alike. I wanted my walk and talk to match.

I began to plan my dream house, my forever house. My first mentor was Paul Bierman-Lytle. He led me in the right direction for low-toxic building materials. My education was just beginning. I began a five-year research project to achieve my healthy home.

What I didn't realize was that, at the same time, I was developing a condition known as multiple chemical sensitivity, or environmental illness. I was diagnosed in the mid-'90s. With the help of Dr. Phillip J. Cohen and Dr. Adrienne Buffaloe (American Academy of Environmental Medicine, Prairie Village, KS), we began the task of uncovering causes and starting detox. The pesticide exposures of my early years, my studio classes as an art major using oil-based products, and the toxic products on many construction sites were all suspect.

Many days it was difficult for me to work, to concentrate, to go to the office—even to get out of bed. I could no longer go on construction sites or be around clients who were wearing perfume or had tobacco odors on their clothing. I was having allergic reactions to almost everything, and was being tested for everything from lupus to rheumatoid arthritis. Even though all of the tests were negative, it was hard to feel any relief because my world was shrinking more and more everyday.

This story does have a happy ending. After almost two years of living in my healthy house full-time, I became well. The healing process was a learning journey as well and one I now want to share. I'm active and happy again and free to move about in the world. My firm is thriving; we handle calls everyday from people with chemical sensitivities. I'm on several boards, both national and international, and feel that I'm truly giving back to the world.

A reminder: this is an ongoing journey. We will never reach a point where we can stop and rest. Saving the planet, saving the health of every person, requires constant vigilance and effort. We must continue to question the role of coal-burning factories and mercury toxicity; our dependence on oil; the consequences of air pollution, acid rain, and pesticide use; and manufacturers producing products harmful to their workers and the public. We must question the impact this is all having on our health and the future of the planet."