

## **Veteran designer opens business in Frederick**

By Ed Waters, Jr. - News-Post Staff

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Sarah Fretwell, who has 25 years of experience in professional interior design and executive management, has launched SJF Interiors at 801 Dunbrooke Court.

Ms. Fretwell said she expects most of her customers to come from a 50-mile area around the District of Columbia. "Though more people tend to shop in a 30-mile radius," she said.

"I find out what the client wants and provide guidance. Sometimes they don't know what they want or are too timid to do anything and want someone to give them guidance," Ms. Fretwell said. She offers a free consultation.

As a multi-retail director and member of the board of directors of the National Kitchen and Bath Association, Ms. Fretwell gained experience in kitchen and bath enhancements, as well as the rest of the house.

"That is a very professional organization," she said of the National Kitchen and Bath Association, where beauty is not the only factor in upgrading, but product quality and consumer satisfaction as well. "They don't just work with constituents (manufacturers), but the consumers as well," she said.

Ms. Fretwell said she believes this is "a good time to be a designer, considering home equity. It is not just the best investment you can make, but people are staying home to entertain and to feel secure. And putting money in the right place in the home can help you get that money back when you sell."

One of the current trends is to design interiors so that handicap access is part of the plan, though it doesn't have to be noticeable. "You don't have to have assist bars in the bathroom, but designing so that even someone can be in a wheelchair or on crutches temporarily can get around the house easier may be considered."

Although a Maryland native, Ms. Fretwell spent most of her life on the West Coast. She and her husband found Frederick, "a great place" and especially praised the Chamber of Commerce of Frederick County for providing "a good network" for small businesses.

Ms. Fretwell's career has included serving as vice president of design for Builders Design, one of the nation's largest interior merchandisers in the United States. During her time there, Builders Design won more than 60 national and regional awards.

She was a principal at Interiors by Design, a regional design firm, and was a merchant and buyer for national retail chains overseeing 700 designers in 138 locations.

Her expertise brought her to the Smithsonian Institution for a seminar on designing interiors for real life, and she has been a member and guest speaker for the California Department of Education Home Economics Careers and Technology Standards Board and guest speaker on interior design careers at the University of Nebraska. Ms. Fretwell is a member of the American Society of Designers and passed the accredited examination from the National Council for Interior Design Qualification.

She is a Certified Interior Designer in Maryland and attends trades shows and continuing education seminars to ensure that her clients have access to a variety of resources. She has personally designed and provided project management services for more than 1,000 clients. She also plans local seminars in the future.

For more information, visit [www.SJFInteriors.com](http://www.SJFInteriors.com), e-mail [sarah@SJFInteriors.com](mailto:sarah@SJFInteriors.com) or call 866-753-4683.

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