

April 3, 2008

Response to "Watch Out for That Pillow"  
To the Editor:

On behalf of the Interior Design Educators Council (IDEC), we are deeply concerned about the misrepresentation of the interior design profession in the article by Clark Neily (Watch Out for That Pillow, April 1). The information in the article is not only erroneous, but degrades a profession that creates interior spaces for the general public as well as private sectors.

IDEC is an organization of over 700 interior design educators associated with colleges and universities across North America and other international locations. The response from interior design educators to Neily's misinformed article has spurred dialogue and concern. The reputation of the Wall Street Journal implies accurate and grounded information. As a consequence of Neily's article, The Wall Street Journal's reputation is now greatly questionable by persons affiliated and knowledgeable of interior design, which Clark Neily obviously is not.

Clark Neily and his cohorts have whittled interior design down to a perception of a frivolous and trivial "occupation". The interior design profession is grounded in a body of knowledge, requires higher education, experience, examination and certification in order to be qualified to handle the complexities of design interior space. The most accurate way to describe the role of the interior designer is to quote the formal definition adopted by NCIDQ, CIDA, IDEC, ASID, IDC, and IIDA:

Interior design is a multi-faceted profession in which creative and technical solutions are applied within a structure to achieve a built interior environment. These solutions are functional, enhance the quality of life and culture of the occupants, and are aesthetically attractive. Designs are created in response to and coordinated with the building shell, and acknowledge the physical location and social context of the project. Designs must adhere to code and regulatory requirements, and encourage the principles of environmental sustainability. The interior design process follows a systematic and coordinated methodology, including research, analysis and integration of knowledge into the creative process, whereby the needs and resources of the client are satisfied to produce an interior space that fulfills the project goals ([www.ncidq.org](http://www.ncidq.org)).

Neily's article is an inaccurate portrayal of interior designers who practice in prestigious and internationally known design firms across the globe. Perhaps most troubling to Mr. Neily's article is a denial of the potential for harm stemming from improper interior specifications potentially created by those not adequately prepared through education and examination to undertake this task. History demonstrates that such missteps can in fact result in human injury. Hundreds of well-respected college and university programs of interior design have made it their mission to arm students with this critical knowledge.

The best method to overcome misperception is excellence and education. IDEC invites Neily and his cohorts to any of our regional and annual conferences held each fall and spring across the U.S. and Canada to learn of the depth of research, practice, and education that grounds interior design as a profession and illustrates excellence in interior design.

Sincerely,

Jane Kucko, FIDEC  
President of IDEC, 2007/2008