

# INTERIOR ARCHITECTURE & PRODUCT DESIGN

## IAPD ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

Shannon (Elder) Vass graduated in 2001 with a Bachelor in Interior Architecture and a Minor in Business Administration. After graduation, Shannon moved to Chicago and started working for Lieber Cooper, an architectural firm that focused on high end corporate and hospitality interiors and graphic design. While at Lieber Cooper, Shannon had the opportunity to work on corporate interior projects along with graphic-environmental design. In Chicago, she worked as a Senior Designer for Childs Dreyfus and a Project Designer for Perkins + Will. Shannon later transitioned to Gensler in Charlotte and Dallas where she worked as an Architectural Designer and Senior Designer and was honored to be appointed to an Associate. Shannon notes that the biggest milestones in her career have been the opportunities to work for two global architecture firms that she had always respected and admired. As her career developed, she shifted gears and began working as a Sales Representative for Knoll Textiles in Dallas where she remains to this day.

“As a sales rep I have the ability to work with various designers from all sizes of design firms on all types of projects. My goal is to be a valued resource that problem-solves and works closely with my designers to find them the best product for their needs. In doing so, it is exciting to see their designs come together,” Shannon said. Her passion runs deep for Architecture and Design and her current sales role for Knoll Textiles is an exciting career route.

“My suggestion is to take advantage of all the opportunities to see factories, mills, showrooms, trade-shows, and conferences. The industry is filled with various avenues which everyone has different interests in and you can learn a lot through each of them,” Shannon said. Her experiences have included extensive travel to various cities around the country. The most memorable travel occurred when she was a designer at Gensler-Charlotte, when she was given the opportunity to travel to Italy to attend the Milan Furniture Fair and visit mills with a large carpet manufacturer.

“The connections I make always lead me to new individuals and opportunities to keep growing in the industry,” Shannon said. The importance of making connections is something she recognized while an IAPD student. She says it was the most important thing she learned as a young professional.



**Shannon Vass**  
2001 IAPD GRAD

*“As you approach graduation and are looking at options on what to do, where to move, how to make it happen - set your goals high and chase after what interests you most.”*

### ADVICE FOR CURRENT IAPD STUDENTS:

**Start exploring various opportunities early.** As a student, I sought out different summer jobs that related to the industry which helped me gain experience in different settings and prepared me for the work force upon graduation. **Do more than what is expected.** There is a lot of competition so always work hard, stay motivated and be a good team player. **Ask questions and stay engaged.** Take off the headphones, be a sponge and soak up as much information from your co-workers as possible.