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# MARTA MITCHELL

*Excellence  
in Business*



WOODY MARSHALL

"I truly believe that design is better if you have more than one brain on it," Marta Mitchell says.

By Jennifer Fernandez

**M**arta Mitchell always knew she wanted to be an interior designer.

She had a role model in her mother, a talented artist who constantly moved around the furniture to create new looks for their home.

Mitchell later graduated from college with a degree in interior design and carried her passion for the industry from her native Brazil all the way

to Greensboro, where she started her own business out of a guest room in her home.

Today, MM Interior Design Group employs more than a dozen people, mostly designers, who are working on about 150 projects right now, she said.

Mitchell, 63, has been named the News & Record's Inspire Award winner for Excellence in Business.

Her husband, Peter, nominated her.

"She continues to invest her time and resources in our local community," he wrote in his nomination letter. "Now as a seasoned professional, she shares her knowledge and experience with her new management/ownership team, as well as with all students who are entering the profession."

He said his wife also created "A Haven for a Healthcare Warrior," which offered free home

renovations for nurses involved in treating COVID-19 patients.

Mitchell believes mentoring is very important.

She loves to work with young people to help them in their careers. Her company has college interns every year — some of whom have come back to work for the company — and brings in middle and high school students to shadow designers.

The students get a chance to experience the work and decide if it is truly where they want to be, she said. Sometimes, students learn that interior design is not the career for them, and that is just as important, she added.

Mitchell's no stranger to recognition for her work. She has won seven Excellence in Design Awards — the equivalent of an "Oscar" for the interior design world — from the American Society of Interior Designers.

She was surprised to learn about the Inspire Award, which honors local women who have made an impact on the community.

"In my mind, I haven't done anything that ... would justify being recognized. It's all in a day's work," she said. "So I mean, it was a bit of a surprise, but it was a big thrill."

It wasn't surprising that her husband nominated her, she said.

She said he's her "biggest fan" and she loves that he believes in her and is impressed with what she's done.

The majority of MM Interior Design Group's work is residential, whether designing new homes or renovating existing living spaces. Their commercial work includes boutique projects such as hotel lobbies, retail stores, restaurants and offices.

Mitchell likes to put the designers in teams of two.

"I truly believe that design is better if you have more than one brain on it," she said. "So we like to collaborate with the architects, the contractors, subcontractors, with the artists, with everyone. Because the more people you have on the project, the better it gets."

For anyone interested in interior design, Mitchell recommends going to school for training.

There's a lot of technology now used to help designers, but other aspects also need to be learned, from basic principles of design to material selections to how color theory works.

"It's essential to have proper training," she said.

## AT A GLANCE

**Name:** Marta Mitchell

**Title:** President

**Education:** Associate degree in interior design from Randolph Community College; bachelor of arts in interior design from Pontifical Catholic University of Campinas in Brazil

**Family:** Husband, Peter; sons Alan, 33, and Mark, 31

**Proudest accomplishment:** I think I'm really proud of how I have been able to develop our company. I started on my own and (brought) it to this point. But mostly to instill on our team a sense of collaboration, as opposed to competition.

**Fun fact:** I have run all of the major half marathons. I was 40 when I did my first race. Running to me feels like free therapy. It's time to go out there and think about things.



COURTESY OF MM INTERIOR DESIGN GROUP

Marta Mitchell shows off an MM Interior Design Group project.

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