## CHAPTER CONNECTIONS

Did you know that SDA has 16 chapters across the U.S. and Canada? SA Chapter member Loretta Rodriguez interviewed Brooke Simcik, CDFA, of the Dallas Chapter, to learn more about her insights and experiences with SDA. Brooke is the Sr. Associate Principal and Business Manager of Vai Architects.

# Meet Brooke Simcik, CDFA of SDA Dallas

in her own words...



**Was President Elect your first boarAd position with National? What made you take the huge leap into a national board position?**

I had the honor of serving as National Secretary my first term with ExCom. I tremendously enjoyed this role. One might feel that it is a lot of effort and be scared by taking minutes. However, in my opinion, it wasn't bad at all, and it allowed me to listen my first year, take notes, and understand how ExCom works together as a team and servers the members of our great organization. I couldn't think of a better role to fill as my first term within ExCom.

Many things influenced the leap to ExCom. First and foremost, I was motivated by others that had taken that journey before me. When meeting women like Stephanie Kirschner, Deborah Gill, Monica Hodges, Carole Steadham, Susan Lankey, Karen Roman, and Pat Leyden, to name just a few, and there were many, I was inspired by their commitment to SDA, their desire to help others be successful. I also wanted to learn more about how the organization comes together to benefit our members and understand the "nuts and bolts" a little better. Not to mention that as a professional, I found myself stagnant and wanted to push myself outside of my comfort zone. Every three or four years, I try to access avenues for learning and see what I can do to help advance others and my career. Moving to ExCom checked all the boxes. The decision to serve SDA members as a part of ExCom is one of the best decisions I have ever made. I will never regret it.

**What was the biggest lesson you learned as National President?**

There were many lessons learned during my journey with ExCom. The most profound thing I learned is never to assume what you have heard is correct. I learned to listen and ask questions before considering what I heard from others was right about any significant issue.

**Have you set a new goal for yourself? Willing to share what it is?**

This year has been full of changes for me professionally. I am one year away from obtaining a degree in accountancy, and I have two other certifications that I will get within the next year too.

**What is your favorite cocktail (with recipe, of course)?**

Chocolate Martini

- 1½ once Godiva Original Chocolate Liqueur
- 1½ once Crème de Cacao
- ½ once vanilla vodka
- 2½ once half-and-half

**How many EDSymposiums have you attended and which has been your favorite? (If only attended one, did you have a session that really spoke to you? Favorite/fun memories?)**

I have attended five EDSymposiums in person and one online. They were all packed full of education, fun, and I met some of the most incredible professionals that I now call friends. Every class spoke to me in different ways, every person I met impacted me in one way or another; however, what truly stands out to me more than anything, and this isn't a punch line, are the members that I have met and how inspired I have been by so many of them.

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environments I worked on. I wanted to create space that positively impacted people's lives. It didn't take long for me to realize the need to start my own business but I was scared to death. I've always had an entrepreneurial spirit but starting my own design firm was not something I ever aspired to do, it just sort of happened.

Enter Life by Design Interiors, LLC. LBD was born in late September of 2020...right in the middle of a pandemic. I bought a small writing desk that lived in the corner of my bedroom, grabbed my laptop, bought my architectural software, did a bunch of other legal and accounting things and hit the ground running. Like many new businesses, there were ebbs and flows. I often wondered how this would all play out.

Cut to 20 months later and you can find me working out of my first private office space. It's hard to believe that all the ups and downs and twists and turns led me here. I am beyond grateful. I have found my passion for design again because I get to do it on my terms and work with the people I choose.

With the help of God and many others, I have been able to create a Life by Design.

Stephanie Georgoulakis, RID, NCIDQ

Get in touch on Social Media @ lifebydesigninteriors

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