

OUR PREMIERE ISSUE!

Atlanta
MAGAZINE'S

HOME

STYLE
&
SUBSTANCE

FIND YOUR PERFECT STYLE

From English Tudor to boho chic,
Atlantans embrace their design passions

PLUS
50 BEST
FURNITURE &
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GENERATION



A FEW YEARS AGO, *House Beautiful* published a family tree tracing the roots of American design. Atlantans dominated its Southern branch—notably, Dan Carithers, John Oetgen, Nancy Braithwaite, Stan Topol, Bobby McAlpine, Suzanne Kasler, and Phoebe and Jim Howard. As the illustration shows, the tradition of young apprentices attaching themselves to respected design professionals seems especially strong here. Take, for example, local designer and antiques dealer Carol Klotz (below right) and her mentor, the late Edith Hills. Once the grande dame of Atlanta decorating, Hills worked alongside renowned architects from Philip Trammell Shutze to Henri Jova. When a young Klotz hired Hills to decorate her Shutze-designed home in the late 1960s, she found the experience so compelling that she asked the designer to teach her everything she knew about the design business.



"I was like a sieve when Edith imparted information," says Klotz, who applied what she learned about furniture history to her own Backhead gallery, Regalo Antiques. A fabric that Brunswick & Fils named after Hills still hangs in Klotz's foyer. And Klotz also remembers her mentor's instruction on originality and taste: "Taste is born into you. You can educate and refine it, but it has to be innate." Says Klotz, "Edith and my husband have been the two biggest influences in my life."

Klotz's reverence for Hills is characteristic of the deep respect that most protégés feel toward their mentors. When we asked a few local designers and architects to discuss the roles mentors played in shaping their careers, we noted an abundance of gratitude in their responses. Yet these feelings of admiration do not seem to be one-sided. When we turned to the mentors themselves, seeking a few sage words about design, we were struck by the great sense of pride they feel in their students' success.



FROM



Look at the resumes of Atlanta's most successful interior designers and architects, and you'll likely find they have one thing in common: mentors

BY JENNIFER BOLES
PHOTOGRAPHS BY BEN ROLLINS



TO



GENERATION

From left
to right,
Morris,
Gandy, and
Westbrook.



mentor

CHARLES GANDY

protégé

BARBARA
WESTBROOK

protégé

AMY MORRIS

➔ Back in the '80s and '90s, few Atlanta design firms were as influential or as respected as Gandy/Peace Inc. Founded by Charles Gandy in 1979 (designer Bill Peace was made partner in 1985), Gandy/Peace made a name for itself with contemporary work—no small feat in a city where traditional decor had long dominated. Although he's now retired, Gandy's influence still looms large over the Atlanta design community, especially among those designers whose careers he helped foster. They include Barbara Westbrook, who established Westbrook Interiors after training under Gandy and later Nancy Braithwaite, and Amy Morris, whose early career included stints at both Gandy/Peace and Westbrook Interiors.



• WESTBROOK

"I always went by the motto of simplify and then exaggerate. It's the idea of going down to a few things and then emphasizing them."
CHARLES GANDY

WESTBROOK: COURTESY OF WESTBROOK; MORRIS: ERICA DINES



• GANDY

BARBARA WESTBROOK

“Charles is such a natural teacher, and he was always gracious with knowledge and praise. He has this personality where he gives lots of credit.

It was great schooling for me to see Charles run his business like a professional. I appreciated the fact that Charles was at the office every morning at eight.

There were no special privileges for him. He was super professional but always pleasant. He also didn't expect one's life to revolve around his business, and he taught me the importance of life outside of work.

He taught me so much about design. I learned how to take a big project and address all of the decisions in their proper order, down to the doorstops.

There needs to be something clean and simple in a room, and I learned that from Charles. It gives a relief to your eyes. I see a heavy influence of Gandy/Peace in my work. I have a need for simplicity mixed with one or two dramatic moments in order to make it more interesting. Charles was always so good at those dramatic moments in a room.

• MORRIS



AMY MORRIS

“Growing up in Atlanta at a time when most decor was traditional, I didn't think that I would develop an appreciation for contemporary design. Until interning for Charles, I had never been around such contemporary, clean spaces before, and I quickly realized that I loved them. It was easy for me to see that Gandy/Peace's work was the best of the best.

I was taught the basic design principles in school, but it was Charles who taught me how to apply them. He was always so right on in the way he approached scale, balance, and

proportion, and he applied the same design principles to both contemporary and traditional rooms. I layer my rooms way more than Charles did, but, like Charles, I know that even if I'm working on a traditional space, I have to start by giving the room 'clean bones.'

One lesson that I learned from Charles is that you have to continue to educate yourself, which was something that he was always doing. He also showed me the importance of being funny and nice. He always approached a situation with humor. After all, it's decorating, not heart surgery.