

*lake norman*

# WOMAN

CELEBRATING THE SUCCESS OF WOMEN

8 THINGS  
THAT MAKE  
YOU GO  
*Whhhaatt!?*

pg. 12

THE  
*medicine*  
BEHIND  
SPRING  
FEVER

pg. 14

ARE YOU  
STUCK IN A  
RUT?

pg. 38

*featuring*  
STARR MILLER OF  
STARRMILLER  
INTERIOR DESIGN

BLOOM  
*Big*



written  
IN THE  
stars!

WRITER Leslie Ogle  
PHOTOGRAPHER Chelsea Bren

*IF YOU  
WOULD  
HAVE ASKED  
A YOUNG  
STARR  
MILLER*

*(FOUNDER/PRINCIPAL  
OF STARR MILLER  
INTERIOR DESIGN)*

*IF SHE KNEW WHAT  
SHE WANTED TO BE  
WHEN SHE GREW UP,  
SHE WOULD HAVE*

*ANSWERED WITH A  
RESOUNDING YES!  
WHEN STARR WAS IN  
THE SEVENTH GRADE,  
HER MOM ALLOWED  
HER TO WORK WITH  
A PROFESSIONAL*

*DESIGNER TO  
REDECORATE HER  
ROOM; AND IT WAS  
THROUGH THIS  
EXPERIENCE THAT  
STARR'S LOVE OF  
DESIGN WAS BORN  
AND SHE BECAME A  
SHINING EXAMPLE  
OF "THE WAY TO DO  
GREAT WORK IS TO  
LOVE WHAT YOU DO."*

Coupled with her exceptional talent and knowledge of the industry, Starr has won just about every award and accolade there is, and while she is the epitome of what talent, hard work, perseverance, and gratitude can achieve, she is not one to take the spotlight, nor all the credit. "We have a remarkable team here," Starr smiles. "I know it may sound cliché, but these women are like my family ... we truly love each other, and it shows in our work."

As family is wont to do, Starr has endearing nicknames for her co-workers. Dianna Lomangino, The Trusted Virtuoso, and Cecile Winstead, The Sassy Shepherd, are two of Starr's stellar teammates and they, too, have had an eye for design since youth.



"Since I was young," Dianna says, "I always had an interest in spaces. I remember in school as I sat in class, instead of working on the assignment, I would daydream of how I would arrange the classroom differently. When we ate at restaurants, I would look around studying every detail, noticing how all the different elements connected to each other."

Originally from Long Island, New York, Dianna's

family moved to Mooresville when she was 8 years old. After graduating from Lake Norman High School, she attended The Art Institute of Charlotte where she received her bachelor's degree in interior design. Shortly thereafter, she joined Starr's team and, nearly 10 years later, here they are. "I am inspired by the ladies I work with every day," Dianna says. "We are all here for each other, sharing lessons learned and encouraging one another."

On a similar note, the team's Sassy Shepherd (aka Cecile), knew design was written in her stars from a very young age as well. "I was always rearranging spaces in our house growing up," she recalls. Before landing in Lake Norman, Cecile's hometown was Morganton, and she moved in 1987 to attend UNC-Greensboro where she earned her bachelor's degree in housing and interior design. Cecile has one daughter, 22-year-old Morgan, who is a graduating senior at Western Carolina University.

"I have been and continue to be inspired by the people I work with," Cecile says. "When you have a great group of women around you, lifting you up, it encourages you to do your best and have fun while doing it. I enjoy bringing my clients' visions to life—making the spaces what



*CECILE  
WINSTEAD*

*DIANNA  
LOMANGINO*



*“THIS COLLABORATION BEGINS WITH THE CLIENT’S GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND DREAMS AND IS THEN LAYERED WITH THE TALENTS OF THREE DESIGNERS WHO ALL HOLD DEGREES IN DESIGN FROM DIFFERENT INSTITUTIONS ...”*

they want them to be, and I love collaborating with our team to make this happen.”

With this constellation of talents, Starr and her team have garnered national acclaim with multiple industry honors. Starr herself graduated from the prestigious Parsons School of Design in NYC and has won the National Interior Design Society’s DOTY (Designer of the Year) award six times, as well as many other national and regional awards. Prior to her interior design career, Starr received her bachelor’s degree in business marketing from the University of Alabama. After graduation, she spent two successful decades in the senior levels of the country’s largest and most respected retailers and Fortune 500 companies.

Additionally, Starr is the first Certified Aging in Place Specialist

(CAPS) designer in the area and was the force behind the 2020 IDS Showhouses project. Prior to moving to North Carolina, she was a designer for HGTV’s “Save My Bath.”

The cornerstone of the success for SMID is the level of collaboration that exists. “This collaboration,” Starr says, “begins with the client’s goals, objectives, and dreams and is then layered with the talents of three designers who all hold degrees in design from different institutions. The diversity of the team’s training, experience, and skills provides our clients with unique designs focused on the individuality of the client—unconstrained by a predictable aesthetic found in much of the industry. Match this incredible pool of design talent with our partnering trade and craftsmen and you have

a truly customized experience and outcome,” she adds.

Starr takes great delight in what each of her teammates brings to the table—individual talents, skills, experiences, and personalities—and it is this versatility, Starr points out, and those beautiful differences that make us better together. “I’m very proud of the business I’ve built,” Starr says with obvious gratitude, “but I am prouder of this team who continue to show up in every way possible ... we are all here because we love this industry, we love our clients, we love each other, and we love this community we call home ... I guess you could say it was written in the stars!”

