

# Paul Eshelman

## Web Bio

### Information

#### Biography

##### Biographical Statement

Professor Paul Eshelman was educated in the field of Industrial Design at Kent State University, B.S., 1970, and the University of Illinois, Champaign-Urbana, M.F.A., 1972. After a period of professional design experience as Senior Designer for Amtrak and Designer and Research Associate for Herman Miller Research Corporation, he joined the faculty in the Department of Design and Environmental Analysis at Cornell University in 1978. At Cornell his teaching of interior design and furniture design and his research collectively focus on his interest in design for special populations including people with Alzheimer's disease. He has been recognized for his service to the field of Interior Design by being named a Fellow of the Interior Design Educators Council, an international organization. From 1990 to 1994 he served as the Editor of the *Journal of Interior Design*, the only refereed (peer-review) journal specific to the field of Interior Design. He continues to serve as a reviewer for *JID*.

##### Department Website Summary

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#### Teaching

##### Teaching and Advising Statement

My primary teaching goal is to facilitate learning about the role of evidence-based information in creating innovative design. To this end I regularly engage students outside their realm of familiarity. My method is to challenge them to design for

what can be termed special populations—segments that differ from the average in society due to stage in human development, injury, disease, congenital condition, or genetic abnormalities. During Spring Semester, 2014, students learned about and developed designs for special populations including frail elderly, people with dementia, people with arthritis, toddlers, children living with their families in homeless shelters, and children confronted with school violence.

A second goal is to incorporate community service as a learning component into each of the courses I teach. In DEA 4300, Furniture as a Social Art, students interacted with people from the larger community, representatives of the populations for which the students were designing furniture.

A third goal is to emphasize full-scale modeling for the purpose of enabling students to predict the consequences of their design decisions and to learn about construction technologies. In DEA 4300 students employed full-scale model construction to develop and illustrate their furniture designs. Students in DEA 1102 use shop equipment to fabricate plywood models for a 3D composition assignment, the Word Box Project. As an aside, it is important to note that the new Human Ecology shop is making an enormously positive difference in students' ability to construct models of their designs. Beyond the exemplary features of the facility--an efficient dust collection system, excellent natural light, and well organized and managed shop thanks to the efforts of John Stager, shop supervisor--the availability of computer driven equipment--the ShopBot and the laser cutter--are making a huge difference in quality of fabrication and student safety.

## **Professional**

### **Current Professional Activities**

Editorial Review Board, *Journal of Interior Design*

## **Research**

### **Current Research Activities**

Many population segments differ from the majority in society due to stage in human development, injury, disease, congenital condition, or genetic abnormalities. These special populations can be relegated to low levels of functionality or can be made highly functional depending in part on the supportiveness of the settings in which these people live. Design is what can make the difference. I am interested in design, both interior and furniture, for special populations. My research seeks understanding of decision making in the process of designing supportive, aesthetically satisfying interiors and furniture for special populations.

One of my current research activities involves working with co-principle investigators, DEA Professor Rana Zadeh, and Judy Setla, MD, Medical Director of Hospice of Central New York, on a Translational Research Institute on Pain in Later Life (TRIPLL) funded study of the built environment in end-of-life care. One

product of this study is a design guidelines book, *Designing End-of-Life Care Settings to Enhance Quality of Life*.

## **Extension**

## **Education**

### **Education**

M.F.A. 1972 - Industrial Design, University of Illinois, Champaign-Urbana, Illinois

B.S. 1970 - Industrial Design, Kent State University, Kent, Ohio

## **Courses**

### **Courses Taught**

Spring Semester 2013:

- DEA 1102, Interior Design Studio II
- DEA 4300, Furniture as a Social Art

## **Websites**

## **Administration**

## **Publications**

### **Selected Publications**

Eshelman, P. & Evans, G. (2014). Special populations studio: Transforming informed response into design. *Journal of Interior Design*. 39(4), v-xvi

Eshelman, P. (2003, March). Sara [a furniture piece designed to support expressions of self for nursing home residents with Alzheimer's disease or related dementias, third iteration]. Best in Show Award, Visual Arts Category, Interior Design Educators Council Annual Design Competition. San Diego, CA.

Eshelman, P., Evans, G. W. & Utamura, S. (2003). Housing features as predictors of housing satisfaction among older adults living independently in the community. In J. A. Krout & E. Wethington (Eds.). *Residential choices and experiences of older adults: Pathways to life quality*. (pp. 49-68) New York, NY: Springer Publishing.

Eshelman, P. & Evans, G.W. (2002). Home again: Environmental predictors of place attachment and self-esteem for new retirement community residents. *Journal of Interior Design*. 28(1), 1-9.

Evans, G. W., Kantrowitz, E. & Eshelman, P. (2002). Housing quality and psychological well being among the elderly population. *Journal of Gerontology*, 57B(4), P381-P383.