



Faces of DHI

Why DHI Membership **IS** Important!

Rachel Smith

Karpen Steel Custom Doors & Frames

Photo Courtesy of Rachel Smith



DHI members, by and large, all seem to have two things in common: first, they are incredibly passionate about this industry and the work they do, and second, this industry was not their first choice. Rachel Smith is no exception. "After graduating college with a degree in biochemistry, I started out my career in the water treatment industry," she recalls. "My career in drinking water treatment was rewarding, but my father, Morris Karpen, had been in doors and hardware most of my life. I grew up witnessing his passion for the industry, so when an opportunity came

for me to join his business, I knew it was a challenge I wanted to try my hand at."

Twenty-five years later, she has no regrets about her choice. "I've loved every minute of it," she says. "I became an engineer because I enjoy solving problems, and the door and hardware industry is certainly a problem-solving industry."

Over the years, Rachel has seen first-hand how important education is to being successful in this industry, so when she's not busy solving problems for customers, she often volunteers her time with DHI. She has served as an instructor, conference exhibitor, committee member, chapter officer, advertiser and author of several articles in *Doors & Hardware*. "Customers want to deal with people they find knowledgeable and who will be able to help with any complications," she says. "I think what DHI does really well in education is we have a place we can go for technical education within the industry. It is so hard to take the time within our own organizations to train new hires. It takes me almost a year to teach somebody enough to be an extremely valuable member of our team if they come from outside the industry. But DHI, with its correspondence course, its online course, some of the basic courses...I can bring somebody up to be knowledgeable within the industry in three to six months, depending on the timeframe of when classes are being offered."

In addition to education, Rachel believes that having a good mentor can make a tremendous difference in a young person's career and feels fortunate to have had her father as a mentor. "His impact on my career was huge," she says. "Not only did he teach me about doors and hardware, but he taught me about customers and the importance of truly listening to them and making their satisfaction a priority. It's not about just getting the job done. In the end, it's about giving customers a positive buying experience and making sure they receive a quality product. I credit my father's example and advice for helping me succeed in the industry." ●

Do you know a DHI member you would like to nominate as the FACE OF DHI? Submit your nominations to Paige Purdum at Ppurdum@dhi.org, and we'll take care of the rest!



YOU are the Face of DHI!

"DHI has been able to help me actually find the current job that I have."

Kim McCallum, Ontario, Canada

Go to www.dhi.org

to see what DHI is doing for you, your company AND the openings industry.

Want More Information?

Contact DHI's Member Services Department at **703/222-2010** or **membership@dhi.org**.



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