

George Walker Steps Down As Ford Styling Director

One of the American automotive industry's best-known and most colorful executives closed another chapter in a career spanning nearly 40 years, George W. Walker, of Bloomfield Hills, stepped down this month as Ford Motor Co. vice president and director of styling. Walker, who occupied this present position since May 1955, was a consultant to the company for nine years previously. He reached the company's normal retirement age of 65 Monday, the sixth anniversary of his election as a Ford vice president.

A man of strong opinions who never hesitated to express them, Walker has been an outstanding figure in the fields of car styling and industrial design.

His design concepts, which have broken sharply and successfully with industry trends, include the 1949 and 1959 Fords, the Falcon, each of the Thunderbirds, and the current Lincoln Continental.

WALKER ENTERED the industrial design field in 1923 as a fashion illustrator, after having played semi-professional football with a

team whose backfield included Jim Thorpe and a scattering of former Carlisle Indians.

Of Cherokee extraction himself, Walker reflects fondly on this association and on his gridding experience. The money he earned at it, although he refused to put him through art schools in Cleveland and Los Angeles. He also studied engineering for one year.

The personal "trademark," which Walker always has considered important, was largely responsible for his first big break.

IN DOING fashion illustrations, he was in the habit of sketching a car of his own design in the background. One of these illustrations eventually came to the attention of the president of the old Peerless Motor Car Co., who offered him a job doing Peerless advertising illustrations.

Walker later joined B. A. R. Raugh-Lang, a Cleveland firm involved at the time in designing bodies for some of America's best-known cars. In 1929, he left Cleveland and moved to Detroit, where he set up shop as a one-man independent industrial design firm.

By the time he turned the firm over to his employees, he became a Ford vice president. Walker was doing nearly a million dollars' worth of business annually.

WITHIN 26 years, he had styled more than 3,000 products of all sorts for a wide variety of industrial concerns — "everything from cannister sets to cars," as he puts it.

Cars he styled or helped style included, in addition to Peerless, the Pierce Arrow, Packard, Willys and Nash.

In earning his reputation as a leader in automotive styling, Walker announced in 1940 the development of a safety instrument panel for cars. In 1944, he predicted that push-button window controls would come into wide-spread use after the war. And in 1947, he had this to say about cars of the future:

"They will provide better visibility; they will be better proportioned, and with lower over-all height; there will be larger interior room; there will be pleasing color arrangements in durable fabrics; and—don't be too shocked!—there will be air conditioning."



Marianne Stregell, 6 Academy Way, weaver and designer, displays the mechanics Bloomfield Hills, internationally known of her art at Cranbrook Academy of Art.

Noted Weaver Leaving C'brook Art Academy

CRANBROOK—Marianne Stregell of Bloomfield Hills, internationally famous weaver and one of the world's most outstanding textile designers will leave her position as head of the weaving department of Cranbrook Academy of Art.

Marianne, who has been associated with the Academy of Art for over 24 years, 18 of them as department head, will move in the fall to the east with her architect-husband, Olav Hammarstrom, and her two children, Sandra and Chris.

There Mrs. Hammarstrom will continue to conceive and construct the textile designs for which she has become famous. Hammarstrom has accepted an architectural commission in the east.

In the meantime, true to the traditions of Cranbrook, Marianne is currently negotiating for her successor.

BORN IN HELSINKI, Finland, Marianne's father, Gustav Stregell, was a famous architect, writer and critic. Her mother, Anna, is a well-known interior decorator.

Following her elementary and high school training, Marianne's family sent her to art school where she concentrated on weaving.

"At school there were weeks and weeks of theory," Marianne recalled. "Finally we were assigned to make plain white towels. Later we progressed to white towels with blue borders and still later, white towels with red borders."

Marianne literally blew up and with the explosion came a decision to create new designs and at the same time a new method of teaching. Consequently, it isn't in the 1962 Michigan Week dates will be May 20-26, Michigan Week always begins the third Sunday in May.

least unusual for a new class at Cranbrook Academy of Art, to be weaving early on the first day.

THE LATE, renowned architect Eliel Saarinen was first President of the Academy of Art, and his wife, Loja, who still resides in Bloomfield Hills, was head of the weaving department.

In Finland, the Saarinens and Stregells were old friends and Saarinen had been closely watching Marianne's progress. So in 1937 when he needed a new weaving instructor he sent for Marianne. Marianne succeeded Mrs. Saarinen as department head in 1942.

Not only does Marianne enjoy the highest of reputations as a teacher, but for all the time she has been at Cranbrook she has worked with and acted as a consultant to architects, interior and industrial designers and textile manufacturers all over the country.

IN HOTELS AND automobiles, on trains and ships can be found Stregell decorative fabrics, bed spreads, floor coverings and table linens. She has traveled and lectured extensively in Europe, Asia, the Far East and throughout the United States.

Group shows and major exhibitions have included her work. She has won many awards and prizes and has held dozens of one-man shows both in this country and abroad.

One of her most gratifying experiences in addition to teaching at Cranbrook was in 1951 when she and her husband, together with another textile designer, a ceramist and a sculptor, became part of the Cottage Industry Project in the Philippines.

"Marianne was selected by the United States and Hammarstrom by the United Nations to redesign the traditional handicrafts of the country into modern, marketable products."

George Will Head Mich. Week in '62

Edwin O. George, 352 Barden, Bloomfield Hills, has been elected general chairman of Michigan Week for 1962 by the Greater Michigan Foundation board of Governors.

George, vice president of the Detroit Edison Co., was selected by a committee composed of past general chairmen.

In accepting next year's chairmanship George said: "I doubt there is another annual event in which as many people take part as fully nor one that has more potential for development of a state. I am certain there is no other activity in the United States in which more people work together for the good of their state."

GEORGE WAS BORN in Petoskey and graduated from Knox College and the University of Illinois. He is a member of the executive committee of the Michigan Industrial Ambassadors, vice president of the Detroit Council of the Boy Scouts of America, and an officer of several civic organizations. George is also a trustee of Kirk in the Hills Presbyterian Church.

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IN NOVEMBER 1957 when the automotive industry was being accused of indifference to or an unawareness of the increasing popularity of small cars, Walker publicly: "I don't believe (small cars) are a fad; I believe they'll always be with us."

Largely because of his early experience as a fashion illustrator, Walker has long been a believer in the importance of feminine influences on design.

Nearly 25 years ago, when he first expressed himself on this subject, he virtually alone was urging that stylists pay more attention to the tastes of the American woman.

NOW, WITH women making up more than 40 per cent of all licensed drivers in the United States, other automotive spokesmen have boarded the hand wagon.

Walker will continue to serve Ford Motor Co. in an advisory capacity. He also will remain active in a number of civic enterprises, including Junior Achievement of Southeastern Michigan, of which he is a director and fund-raising committee chairman.

B'ham Accountants Take Top Posts

Charles A. Erdmann, 6830 Castle Drive, Birmingham, was elected president of the Detroit Chapter of the National Association of Accountants at a meeting held last Thursday at the Rick-Fort Shelby Hotel.

Erdmann is vice president-controller of the Parco, Davis & Company.

At the same meeting, Leon E. Jackman, 4065 Beach Road, Birmingham, was elected vice president of the Detroit Chapter of the National Association of Accountants. Jackman is controller and assistant treasurer of the Holly Carburetor Company, Warren.

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