UW-Stout alumna projects a positive image

By Pamela Powers
Menomonie News Bureau

A UW-Stout grad who is an author, independent fashion consultant, clothing designer and an advocate for civility can now add nationally recognized image consultant to her resume.

Cindy Ann Peterson, 55, recently received the 2011 Chapter Member of the Year Award from the Association of Image Consultants International for the Washington, D.C., chapter. She lives near Washington.

The award is the latest in a long list of career accomplishments for Peterson, who first became interested in clothing as a child.

"In fifth grade I got my start by sewing my own clothes," Peterson said, noting she wore a brace as a child to correct scoliosis, a curvature of her spine. "I had to get the clothes to fit over the brace. Every week we would go to Minnesota Fabrics, buy fabric, and I would make a top or pants."

Peterson, who grew up in Bloomington, Minn., received her bachelor's degree in apparel, textiles and design from UW-Stout in 1979. After graduation, Peterson worked as a home economist for Minnesota Fabrics conducting consumer classes and in-store events. She later worked for the Viking Husqvarna sewing machine company as an educational consultant, sales manager and spokeswoman.

Peterson has designed numerous sewing patterns and has had patterns and articles published in such magazines as Country Living, Better Homes and Gardens and Vogue Bridal Sewing. She has also been recognized for her fashion creations that range from national-level competition skating costumes to clothing designed for people with physical disabilities. In 1994 she was an on-call tailor for then-President Bill Clinton.

Peterson has written numerous published articles and contributed to two books. The first, published in January 2011, is titled "My Style, My Way" and discusses the importance of good posture. The second book, "The Power of Civility," addresses the art of conversation and the value of active listening.

"No degree of high fashion can make up for a lifetime of poor posture," Peterson said. "Poor posture shows uncertainty, a lack of self respect, lack of confidence and ability."
Peterson is so convinced of the importance of good posture that she encourages people to use a video camera to record their posture with an eye on improving it.

In addition to bettering image, Peterson works to improve civil discourse through her membership in national civil engagement organizations.

"Civility is not a high, lofty ambition or theoretical option for debate," she said. "It is something that should be part of our everyday lives."

As our society becomes more fast-paced because of technological advances, kindness is getting lost along the way, Peterson said. She urges people to be respectful, responsible, show restraint toward others and make civility a lifestyle.

LynAnn King, who lives in California and is the international media chairwoman for the Association of Image Consultants International, said Peterson's background gives her great insight into design, fit and style.

"She is really high energy and top-notch in a number of areas," King said.

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**Learn More**

To read Cindy Ann Peterson's thoughts about image consulting, fashion and practices promoting civility, or to buy her books, visit [cindyannpeterson.com](http://cindyannpeterson.com).