

More News

Scholarship winner shares her experience

The recipient of the inaugural **2014 Jenny Blanc Design Scholarship**, Tyra Woodroffe, is back from London and seeking to inspire other students at the Barbados Community College (BCC).

Woodroffe, a 19-year-old graduate of the BCC's design programme, recently visited the institution after completing a six-month stint at the England headquarters of international designers Jenny Blanc Interiors.

Along with giving an overview of her "eye-opening" experience in London to the BCC's 2014-2015 interior design class, Woodroffe and Jenny Blanc's Caribbean director, Emma Blanc, presented the students with hundreds of samples of fabric of varying colours, textures and designs.

"Designing is an exciting career and my trip to London allowed me to be more involved in the hands-on aspect. It was different and enlightening and the exposure also allowed me to benefit

from a wider scope of design techniques and experiences," said Woodroffe.

Explaining why she opted to provide the current BCC students with such a varied range of fabric samples, the emerging designer said BCC students were always challenged to find wide varieties of fabrics and they would certainly be useful.

This was underscored by design tutor Stephen Jackman, who accepted the samples on behalf of the class, and thanked Woodroffe and Jenny Blanc for their kind gesture.

"Fabric samples are essential for interior designers and will enhance their portfolios and knowledge," he said.

Woodroffe also gained City and Guilds certification in computer assisted design (AutoCad 2) and will fulfill the second half of her scholarship programme through a six month attachment at the Hometown-based showroom of Jenny Blanc in Barbados.



Jenny Blanc Design scholarship winner, Tyra Woodroffe (standing right), presenting fabric samples to Barbados Community College design tutor, Stephen Jackman. (GP)

The emerging designer was also formally presented with the City and Guilds certificate by Sue Thomas-Richardson, design director of Jenny Blanc.

Through the partnership with the BCC, Woodroffe emerged as the first winner of

the Jenny Blanc all-expenses-paid scholarship last June.

This was after students were assessed on their course work and a special project that including the interior design of a four-bedroom luxury home – complete with furniture, fabrics, lighting

and functional spaces.

The next scholarship will be offered in 2016 and Jenny Blanc Interiors also revealed that the top two students from the 2014-2015 class will be eligible to compete. (PR)

CIBC salutes first female boss

As the world celebrated International Women's Day recently, CIBC FirstCaribbean International Bank also celebrated its female employees – especially those in senior positions.

One individual who stands out is the first female to hold the position of managing director for the Barbados operating company, which includes the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States and Belize.

On June 1, 2013, Donna Wellington created history when she became the first woman to be appointed as the managing director of the Barbados operating company and only the third female to ever hold such a position within the banking structure of CIBC FirstCaribbean.

The other two, both Bahamians, served as managing director of The Bahamas at various times – Sharon Browne when the organisation started as FirstCaribbean and Marie Rodland-Allen, who is the current

managing director there.

Wellington's youthful looks belie her experience in the financial services industry, which spans over 25 years, having worked for Sagicor, Ernst and Young Caribbean and PricewaterhouseCoopers.

Having worked with CIBC FirstCaribbean for 10 years she has gained valuable experience in Barbados and The Bahamas working in various segments.

She is considered a specialist in the real estate and hospitality sectors where she specialised as an associate director in the investment banking arm of the wholesale banking segment.

In her present role, she is now responsible for regulatory affairs and revenue generation across all key segments of the commercial banking operation in nine countries.

"Many bankers have always been bankers. I am happy that I was able to additionally see banking from the customer perspective, as an advisor and then as a staff member at varying levels. I believe this helps

me to see additional dimensions rather than simply the leadership lens, which helps customer centricity and also to understand the point of view of my colleagues," she said.

Describing herself as a passionate advocate for the bank, Wellington credits the support of her colleagues for helping her to shoulder the "tremendous responsibility" she carries as managing director.

"You don't do this job alone; I have a great team which shares the burden, but I feel responsible to my colleagues and to my customers to ensure that their respective needs are met," she said.

The holder of a BSc in accounting from the University of the West Indies and a member of the Certified General Accountants of Canada (now CFA Canada), Wellington finds a work life balance by helping others, especially through assisting young people to reach their highest potential and is very active in her church choir and youth camp.

She also enjoys cooking and her garden, which she tends during



Donna Wellington. (GP)

whatever down time she can get, where she nurtures her love for roses and orchids, and takes special pleasure in being able to pick fresh herbs from her garden to use in her cooking.

As to the bigger picture of the economy and the outlook for the banking industry, she describes it as "extremely challenging" but confirms the need to help to be part of the solution that will turn things around.

In celebration of International Women's Day, the bank also held a financial health seminar for its female employees, which was conducted by the head of retail, Michelle Whitelaw. (PR)