

Gifts & Decorative ACCESSORIES

THE INDUSTRY AUTHORITY FOR 92 YEARS ■ WWW.GIFTSANDEC.COM ■ NOVEMBER 2009 ■ \$10

EDITOR'S LETTER

Counting Down to 2010

For the past two years, the November issue of *Gifts & Decorative Accessories* has presented a "State of the Industry" report. But in a year that has been difficult in all areas of our industry, The State of the Industry can be summed up rather succinctly — In Flux.

The downturn of the economy, the banking and credit crisis, increasing unemployment and general insecurity have all had an impact on our businesses. Over the past year, we have seen our retail base shrink with more than the usual number of gifts and decorative accessories stores, large and small, shuttered. We have also seen a number of vendors in financial straits, while others have quietly just closed their doors. Consequently, many of our trade shows have seen less buyer traffic and a drop in exhibitors, and permanent showroom buildings are seeing more empty spaces.



But the entrepreneurial roots of this industry also give it a certain spark of optimism and resiliency. When doors close, others open; the downturn did not deter new vendors from entering the market or retailers from opening new stores. Nor did it deter AmericasMart from adding the new Building 2 West Wing, MMPI and Urban Expositions from purchasing trade shows and World Market Center Las Vegas and MMPI from announcing new trade shows launching in 2010.

Economic insecurity forced many to view their businesses with a more critical eye and put their efforts and money where they will return the best results. With fewer dollars to spend, vendors are focusing more on quality and value rather than mass; and buyers are sticking to budget and buying more cautiously by ordering what they know they can sell. By the mid-year markets, the long faces of January had turned to smiles with business moving forward.

So as we move forward, closing out the first decade of this new millennium, rather than a "State of the Industry" report, we too shifted focus to present our "Countdown to 2010," starting with our 25 gifted retailers snapshots.

In this issue, too, is a feature profiling 15 influential women active in this industry today who have helped it grow and change. It would be remiss of us not to acknowledge the contributions of several other women who have either passed away or retired from the industry but whose legacies remain: Helen Boehm, co-founder, CEO, Boehm Porcelain; Helen Brett, founder, Helen Brett Enterprises; Carol Dixon, executive director, 41 Madison, and 2008 *G&DA* Lifetime Achievement Award honoree; Mildred Mottahedah, founder, Mottahedah & Co.; Carol Sedestrohm-Ross, American Craft Council and NYIGF's Handmade division; Phyllis Sweed, editor/co-publisher, *Gifts & Decorative Accessories*; Winnie Watson Sweet, founder, Intl. Collectibles Expo, South Bend, IN. The leadership, creativity and vision of all these women have helped make this industry great.

Caroline Kennedy
Caroline Kennedy, Editor-in-Chief