

DESIGN COMPETITION

New York dealer, AFD Contract Furniture, makes an intelligent contribution with a competition for New York interior design students and a \$10,000 annual scholarship.

While the design industry reflects on the issue of closing the wide gap between what the designer needs to know in the real world of business and what can be taught in schools, there are forward thinking members of the dealer and manufacturing communities who are taking positive steps to participate in the total learning experience. One company is the New York dealership AFD Contract Furniture Inc. For the past two years, Chairman Samuel Aarons, in a generous gesture of giving back to the profession that has rewarded him (AFD volume has increased to \$70 million in the past 6 years) has granted a \$10,000 scholarship to be awarded to interior design students of merit. This year's competition projects were integrated into courses at Parsons School of Design and the New York School of Interior Design. The two juries included leading New York designers.

Parsons students were given the assignment of planning and designing the corporate office of a manufacturer of table top

products. The imaginative solutions generally referenced the nature of the manufacturer's products. One floor plan reflected the geometry of products, another included a literal representation of a table top, while a third incorporated the reception area in the showroom. Winners were John Bardsley and Maria Bonomo.

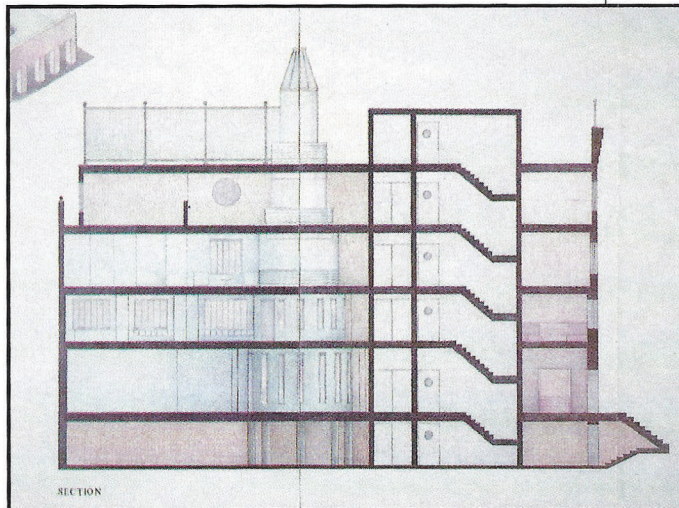
With suggestions from *Interiors* concerning problem concept (an editor sat on both juries) students from the New York School of Interior Design designed a corporate fitness center and child care facility in a four-story building (formerly

fulness and thoughtful planning. Winners were junior student team Ana Verna and Alicia Orrick and senior student team Brenda Savryn and Patricia Kent.

The benefits of the competition are clear: experience and opportunity for all. Students meet practicing designers who in turn meet prospective employees (one juror offered a student a job). But this unique competition had something more—input from the manufacturing and publishing arms of the industry. All due credit to AFD for making it happen. ■

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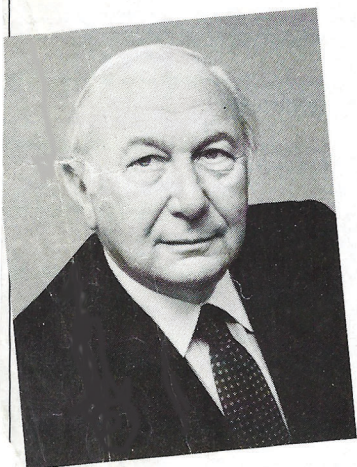
SUMMARY: In the second year of its \$10,000 scholarship program, AFD Contract Furniture awarded six prizes to students from Parsons School of Design and the New York School of Interior Design. The competition is an intelligent way of linking education to real world design business.



the home and studio of George Nelson). An integral part of the research phase for students was information from experts. New York day care professional Nancy Montgomery talked about day care center design and code restrictions. Steelcase flew in two people to present the rationale of its wellness Halo Center.

The input paid off. The work was highly professional with an overall familiarity with the demands of day care and fitness, while the presentations exhibited a clever mix of play-

Above: Winning design for corporate fitness and day care center by New York School of Interior Design students Ana Verna and Alicia Orrick.



Above: Samuel Aarons, of AFD Contract Furniture.