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**MEMBER PROFILE - NOVEMBER 2002**

## **Karen Nelson Kent**

“I feel truly fortunate to be able to do what I absolutely love,” says Karen Nelson Kent. Her business, Floral Diversity, has become synonymous with exquisite, custom floral designs for events of all kinds, from grand to intimate. Believing that fresh flowers and award-winning designs make the perfect gift for any occasion, Karen specializes in party work, interior plantscapes and permanent botanical designs for weddings, funerals, birthdays, corporate events and other occasions where flowers are appropriate. Floral Diversity celebrates the fact that Karen’s efforts are diverse, creative and a step beyond conventional. “I like to think of my work as eclectic and progressive,” says Karen. Clients agree that whatever we call it, it’s beautiful.

Karen’s background has been as diverse as her floral designs. While flowers were a continuing link through a variety of career choices, it took a while for Karen to realize that the flower industry was where she belonged. So despite degrees in nuclear medicine, journalism and advertising, as well as a web-based business helping people find scholarship money for college, Karen always worked with flowers at least on a part-time basis. About four years ago, she launched Floral Diversity, deciding to follow her passion and do flowers full time. Karen takes pride and pleasure in going to the flower market to hand pick everything she uses. She loves the freedom to choose her products and enjoys using the best ingredients for her designs. She has a wonderful team of professional florists whom she calls in on a sub-contract basis when a very large event requires more hands.

A WBO member for approximately seven years, Karen likes our group’s networking and counts a large percentage of her clients as WBO members. She brings flowers to almost every meeting and gives them away as door prizes, calling this practice “the best kind of advertising.” Karen augments her design skills by taking many classes. She has had courses with Dutch designers; just this year, she studied in Singapore, and she is currently taking a class in traditional Japanese floral design. She also freelances with larger event companies, so she gets a chance to exchange ideas and work with others in her field.

Originally from the Detroit area, Karen came here in 1978. While she loves to travel, she enjoys the diverse cultures here and, when she’s not working, she loves to occupy herself by “people watching.” She is now getting ready for the busy holiday season ahead.