

Fulbright Award

Provides International Fashion Experience



Phyllis Miller works with some of the international fashions in her collection.

By Bob Ratliff

Clothing designers and manufacturers around the world can benefit from the work of an award-winning Mississippi State University professor, thanks to a prestigious award.

Phyllis Bell Miller, associate professor of human sciences, traveled to Bulgaria this summer on a Fulbright Scholarship for teaching and research. While in the East European nation, she will collect information for an Internet database of the country's traditional dress. She will also assist students in designing current fashions based on traditional dress.

"Bulgaria will be the prototype for a database of traditional dress and folk costumes from around the world," Miller said. "The Bulgarian fashion industry is growing, and I want to stimulate international interest in the industry itself as well as in the country's traditional styles and colors."

The veteran member of MSU's School of Human Sciences pioneered the art of apparel design on personal computers in the 1980s.

Her programs have been used by teaching institutions, manufacturers and the U.S. Navy, among others. She has worked with the developers of AutoCAD, a computer program originally used by architects and engineers, and has modified the program for the apparel industry.

Miller has already traveled to 33 countries collecting information on both men's and women's national dress, colors and customs.

"The Fulbright scholarship will allow me to collect information at museums and cultural sites throughout Bulgaria," she said. "I'm especially interested in collecting information that will allow designers to make exact color matches."

The Fulbright organization was established by Congress in 1946 to enhance mutual understanding among nations of the world.

Miller traveled to Bulgaria's capital, Sofia, in July to teach at the Bulgarian Academy of Fine Arts from September until returning to MSU in early February.

At Mississippi State, she teaches courses in computer-aided design for Apparel, Textiles, and Merchandising and for Interior Design.

Miller received a certificate from the Academy Nvart, School of French Couture in Michigan, and earned her bachelor's degree in clothing and textiles from Mundelein College in Chicago. Her master's degree is in design and rehabilitation from Michigan State University, and she earned a doctorate in design and journalism at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville.



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