

Vivien Woofter



Vivien Woofter was born in Weston but moved to Clay where she grew up and graduated from Clay High School. She earned a scholarship to WVU and had a great desire to learn about furnishing, fabrics and design. Her professors at WVU often had to prepare extra classes and assignments to fill the void in the Home Economics Department.

Upon graduation from WVU, she had a scholarship for graduate work at Pitt and the University of Minnesota, which at the time, were the top schools in fabrics and design.

Woofter began her service to the United States in 1968 as an interior designer for the General Services Administration in Washington D.C. Her projects included Army Hospitals, courthouses, congressional offices and all Navy Flag residences.

Most noteworthy is her work to develop the first furniture standards for the handicapped. In 1976, Woofter became the Head of Interior Design for the White House. From 1977-1981, Woofter served as the head interior designer for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). In this role, she developed an art program for all the HHS offices in the nation.

In 1981, she became the Senior Interior Designer and Assistant Chief for the U.S. Department of State. Here, she labored to return rooms to the look they once had, often using parquet floors, gilded paneling, damask wall coverings and period furniture.

In 1988, Woofter began her stint as the U.S. Department of State, overseas Building Operations Director. In this role she was responsible for 360 residences worldwide as well as offices. In her presumed last role with the State Department, Woofter served as the Interior Designer and Heritage Preservation Officer for the Office of Overseas Building. Here she secured funds to research and write the history of the interiors of the U.S. Ambassador's residence in Paris and to execute the restoration of the main salon.

In the late 1990s, Woofter spearheaded the development of the cultural resource management program at WVU. Because of this program, WVU graduates are working across the state preserving and restoring many iconic structures.

Woofter retired in 2014 but only for a weekend before she was called back by the State Department in the position of Historic Cultural Advisor. Woofter is currently working to develop a 501-c3 non-profit organization to maintain all the Department of State's properties and collections abroad.