

Dr. Susan Ray-Degges Selected as Trailblazer of the Year by IAOTP

The International Association of Top Professionals (IAOTP) will honor Dr. Susan Ray-Degges at their Annual Awards Gala in NYC at the Plaza Hotel

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/EINPresswire.com/ -- The International Association of Top Professionals ([IAOTP](#)), a premier global organization recognized for honoring excellence across industries, has proudly selected [Dr. Susan Ray-Degges](#) as Trailblazer of the Year for 2026. This distinguished recognition celebrates Dr. Ray-Degges' exceptional contributions to interior design and higher education, her innovative leadership in design education, and her unwavering commitment to advancing the profession.

Renowned for her expertise in environmental design, accessible living environments, and evidence-based design practices, Dr. Ray-Degges has become a respected leader in her field, inspiring students, colleagues, and future generations of designers through her dedication to academic excellence, research, and meaningful community engagement.



The Trailblazer Award recognizes individuals who have made significant contributions to their profession by breaking new ground, inspiring innovation, and setting new standards of excellence. This distinguished honor celebrates visionary leaders whose work paves the way for future generations. Dr. Ray-Degges will be presented with this award at IAOTP's Annual [Awards Gala](#) this December at the iconic Plaza Hotel in New York City.

□ www.iaotp.com/award-gala

With more than three decades of experience, Dr. Ray-Degges has established herself as a respected authority in interior design and design education. A dynamic and accomplished leader, she currently serves as Program Coordinator and Professor in the Interior Design Program at North Dakota State University, where her academic work focuses on the human dimensions of environmental design. She is deeply committed to preparing students for

meaningful careers in interior design through community engagement, evidence-based design practices, and accessible home design.

Throughout her distinguished career, Dr. Ray-Degges has held a variety of teaching and academic leadership positions. Prior to her current role, she served as Associate Professor and Assistant Professor at North Dakota State University. Earlier appointments include faculty positions at the University of Central Arkansas, part-time teaching roles at Southwest Missouri State University, and a Graduate Teaching Assistantship in Environmental Design at the University of Missouri. These experiences have broadened her perspective on design education and reinforced her commitment to academic excellence.



Her areas of expertise include higher education and teaching, research, curriculum design and development, program development, interior design, and public speaking.

Before embarking on her professional journey, Dr. Ray-Degges earned a Bachelor of Science in Home Economics with a concentration in Housing and Interior Design and a minor in Art from Missouri State University. She went on to earn a Master of Science in Housing and Interior Design from the University of Missouri, focusing on spaces designed to support individuals with disabilities and older adults. She later completed a Doctor of Philosophy in Human Environmental Sciences at the University of Missouri, specializing in environmental design and gerontology.

In addition, Dr. Ray-Degges is an NCIDQ Certified Interior Designer and a Certified Interior Designer in Minnesota through the state's Board of Architecture, Engineering, Land Surveying, Landscape Architecture, Geoscience and Interior Design.

Throughout her illustrious career, Dr. Ray-Degges has received numerous awards and recognitions for her contributions to education and interior design. She has been honored by Marquis Who's Who with inclusion in Who's Who of Top Educators and Who's Who of Professional Women in Education and Interior Design. Earlier this year, she was named IAOTP's Top Professor of the Year in Interior Design and Empowered Woman of the Year. This December, at IAOTP's Annual Awards Gala at the iconic Plaza Hotel in New York City, she will be recognized for her inclusion in IAOTP's Top 50 Fearless Leaders publication and will receive two of the

organization's highest honors: Top Professor of the Decade in Interior Design and Trailblazer of the Year.

Looking back, Dr. Ray-Degges attributes her success to perseverance, a strong work ethic, and the guidance of mentors throughout her journey. When not working, she enjoys traveling and spending time with her family. As she looks toward the future, she hopes to continue inspiring the next generation of design professionals while making a lasting impact on the fields of interior design and higher education.

Watch her video here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NgTTOIHUw1o>

For more information, please visit:

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/susan-ray-degges-ph-d-fasid-fidec-52b4322/>

About IAOTP

The International Association of Top Professionals (IAOTP) is an international boutique networking organization that selects the world's most distinguished and accomplished professionals across a wide range of industries. These elite professionals are provided opportunities to collaborate, share insights, serve as keynote speakers, and inspire others within their fields. Membership is not open to the general public. Candidates must be personally invited by the President or nominated by an esteemed honorary member following a brief interview.

IAOTP's experts have provided thousands of top-tier professionals worldwide with the recognition and credibility they deserve, helping them strengthen their personal brands and expand their influence. The organization prides itself on being a one-of-a-kind boutique network that handpicks only the most exceptional individuals and brings them together on a premier platform designed to foster meaningful connections and professional growth. IAOTP remains one of the most elite and highly respected professional recognition organizations in the world.

For more information on IAOTP, please visit: www.iaotp.com

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