

## Executive Q&A with Karen Black

# Designer finds job rewarding

By Paula Burkes  
Business Writer

Karen Black, president of a karen black co. in northwest Oklahoma City, has known since she was a budding college student she wanted to design living spaces. She early on nixed commercial design, because she didn't want to mess with wearing pantyhose and making presentations to boards.

"I wanted to wear cool boots and wild jewelry," Black, wearing knee-high black boots and hoop earrings, said. "I wanted to make a statement."

She has. Since Black opened her company in 1997, her business has taken off. Her projects span from Ardmore to Pebble Beach; more than 80 percent come from word-of-mouth referrals.

"We've found the common denominator is most customers own their own businesses," Black said. "And if the fit is right, we'll take them."

Black reviews all designs and serves as the project manager on every job. But since her son was born six years ago, there are no more 90-hour work weeks.

### Personally speaking

■ **Position:** President, a karen black co.

■ **Web site:** www.karenblackskitchens.com

■ **Birthdate:** June 9, 1963.

■ **Education:** University of Oklahoma, bachelor's in interior architecture.

■ **Family:** Husband, Scot Sigler, the couple will be married 10 years in September; son Scotty, 6.

■ **Pastimes:** Water skiing, snow skiing and golf. "After my mom passed away in September, my husband, son and I drive to Purcell every Sunday to play golf with my father."

My parents let me be me, encouraging me in what I wanted to do. I was always tinkering with and making things. I used to make Christmas manger scenes and my dad would show me how to connect the wires to light them. Once, I made a ham-



BY PAUL B. SOUTHERLAND, THE OKLAHOMAN

Karen Black, owner of a karen black co., stands Thursday in her Oklahoma City showroom with a kitchen design.

unbiased.

Finally after 15 years, I decided I should learn to cook to take my business to the next level. I love to grill up a beef tenderloin or make lasagna rolls. And any kind of soup is always fun. I know I'm biased now to the ways I like to cook and entertain.

A co-worker wanted us to buy the business together. But I'd just gone through a divorce and didn't like the idea of having a partner; it felt like being married again.

She couldn't come up with the funding, but I eventually did — after going to seven banks and finally talking with one banker about our

two that showed up. I used to kid him that he paid everyone not to come. We started playing golf together and had a ball. Nine months later, we were engaged. Both of us are very religious people and believe in living life well, having good morals, and loving and accepting others with a focus on Christ. I knew he'd