

## Designer, builder turns two-dimensional ideas into reality

By Julie Dickerson  
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**HURST** - Inside Andy Reddick's custom furniture shop on Tube Drive, a giant floor fan creates a breeze that blends the scent of fresh-cut wood with a faint, lingering smell of varnish.

Woodworking tools, old and new, are arranged efficiently throughout the room. Against a far wall stands a giant Swiss-made planer for working on massive commercial doors and store fixtures.

At hand is a stack of high-quality lumber -- cherry, mahogany, walnut and an exotic bubinga variety from West Africa that can cost as much as \$300 a board.

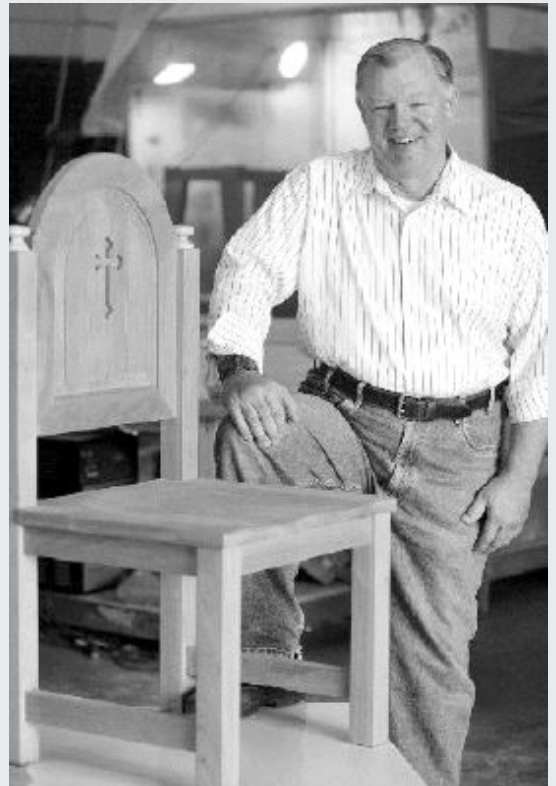
For more than 25 years, Reddick, 53, has been designing and building custom furniture. He began while completing his bachelor's degree in structural architecture at the University of Texas at Arlington in the late 1970s.

"The thing that I know about myself is that I love to build things," Reddick said. "I love to be hands-on. And for me to take someone's two-dimensional ideas and turn them into reality gives me great satisfaction."

While still in school, he worked part time as a staff assistant in the art department, which allowed him access to a vast inventory of woodworking machinery, he said. After he mastered the machines, his friends started asking him to make things for them.

Now he is commissioned to build items for museums, churches, libraries, city governments, store owners and private clients.

### IMAGES



STAR-TELEGRAM/JEN FRIEDBERG

Andy Reddick designs and builds custom furniture out of his shop in Hurst, and he says he is a perfectionist.

Evidence of his showroom-quality work is scattered throughout the Metroplex -- the graceful arched doors of the Cathedral Santuario de Guadalupe in Dallas; a display case at the Dallas Public Library that holds a rare original printing of the Declaration of Independence; the hand-carved stair treads ordered by the city of Grapevine for its tourism office.

Longtime customer Sheila Purdy of Fort Worth said there's nothing Reddick can't make out of a block of wood. Her house is full of Reddick originals, including a crackle-finished computer work center and a recessed entertainment unit that rolls out on casters for easy access to the wiring behind a wide-screen television.

"If you can articulate to him what you want, he can come up with ideas that are functional," she said. "He's amazing because he is much more than a furniture builder."

But Reddick is the first to concede that his perfectionism and artistic passion can sometimes be a curse.

"I have been asked upon occasion to build something fast and cheap," he said. "But I can't do it. For me to slap two boards together and gun them down -- it just grates on me so badly I can't stand it."

So Reddick continues to work at his own pace, sometimes taking all day to perfect one detail and make sure that drawers slide along their tracks as smooth as glass.

After 28 years of marriage, those are the qualities that Reddick's wife, Susan, has come to accept in her husband. She helps out around the shop with administrative tasks, carrying loads of lumber and other chores.

"I do a lot of sanding, which is a very thankless job," she said in a lighthearted tone. "He wants it to be very good. So you sand it until you're sick of it, and then you sand it three more times after that. Then you're done."

## **IN THE KNOW**

### **Woodworking standards**

The Architectural Woodwork Institute sets the standards for the architectural woodwork industry.

- The 3,500-member group has initiated an Adopt-A-Shop program designed to generate more interest in woodworking careers.
- AWI members are asked to build a relationship with local high school shop teachers by donating scrap wood, drill bits or saw blades and helping to teach young people the value of learning a trade.

SOURCE: Philip Duvic, AWI director of marketing and communications