



Erin C. Dennis

[erindennis@mac.com](mailto:erindennis@mac.com)

816-813-3913

[www.erindennis.net](http://www.erindennis.net)

## Art Direction, Product and Graphic Design

- Consistency in aesthetic excellence; turning consumer trends into successful, relevant product.
- Full range experience in social expression and gift product development: innovation and research, planning, design, procurement, vendor communication, production, retail execution.
- Innovative with attention to strategic intent, consumer value, brand message, execution.
- Resourceful thinker. Avid online research, ability to discover potential and inspiration in unexpected places.

### Key Accomplishments:

#### **Hallmark (Product)<sup>RED</sup>** (2007 – 2009) <http://www.hallmark.com/red>

- Launched an entirely new platform focused on socially responsible product. Key early involvement in branding, merchandising, PR, partner relationship dialog. Initial strategy kickoff to retail presence in six months. The (RED)<sup>™</sup> partnership is Hallmark's largest social-impact initiative in the history of the company, and was recognized as a catalyst for a new confidence in creative potential to forward the brand.
- Leader of core team influencing all product categories under this sub-brand. Evolved product strategies, aligning with insights around "socially-aware" and millennial consumer targets. Goal to reach new consumers in our stores was very successful.
- High profile presentations: corporate leaders and board members, Leo Burnett Agency, the (RED) organization (including Bobby Shriver and Bono).
- Product development travel to Mali, West Africa (*with Procurement, Quality, and Operations*) to create the mudcloth bag. Established new relationships, resolved quality issues, ongoing follow-up communication in French or English. <http://www.hallmarkcitizenship.com/> ("supplier partnerships")
- Photography during this trip was included as part of the Hallmark website and internal presentations.

Alternative sourcing project (2008): Initiated venue to share findings in Africa: promoting materials and vendor capabilities with creative or procurement. Goal: establish sources outside of China; engage internal talent to work with the materials, develop prototypes, effectively use handwork from Fair Trade sources.

#### **Hallmark goes Green** (2007 – 2009) <http://www.hallmark.com/green>

- Launched the first Eco-friendly card product lines in 2008, building a strategy of incrementally greener materials as part of brand message. Initiated unique collaboration across full life cycle of product, affecting procurement, operations, merchandising, packaging, PR. Results retailed prominently at Wal-Mart.
- Leader of creative team that individually became ambassadors of the cause, by leading grass-roots efforts to pioneer in corporate goals of energy and/or waste reduction, corporate or community involvement.
- Implemented the Green Icon and Claim Line (3/2008); a sku-level product message to consumers, about our corporate-wide commitment to environmental responsibility.
- Initiated cross-functional Green Technology Innovation Group to regularly share ideas, efforts and progress around sustainability. Cross-functional team included design, retail, and operations. Results include:

Closed-loop paper stock: Initiated the creation of new paper stock for product and promotional materials, reducing Hallmark's manufacturing waste stream and providing additional brand messaging opportunity.

Up-cycled Walmart Vests: (2007) Hallmark partnered with Wal-Mart to create greeting cards for military personnel on paper stock made using the retailer's outdated blue vests.

#### **Maya Angelou Life Mosaic** (2001-2004)

- Developed a strong and trusting creative relationship with Dr. Maya Angelou to build an emotional, meaningful gift program with passionate fans.
- Leader of core team influencing all product categories under this sub-brand. Moved creative strategy forward while managing costs and capabilities, and keeping the relationship strong.

## Professional Experience:

Product excellence: Strategies and product lines brought to life. Aesthetic point of view significantly stretched portfolio of product lines at Hallmark.

Project management: Team leadership, strategic judgment, extensive cross-functional communication.

Concept Development / Innovation: De-risking "thought-work" : Research ideas, trends, and assess potential of socially aware ideas in alignment with brand goals and equity.

**Art Director : Socially Aware Connecting** New Concept Commercialization, Hallmark (2007- 2009)  
Hallmark innovation platform focused on Socially Responsible ideas, including card lines such as (Product)<sup>RED</sup> and Green (eco-friendly) lines. Built and communicated creative strategies to reach new consumers and get ahead of market gaps. High profile brand strategy discussions. Created, organized, and pitched innovative ideas to high level audiences, both internal and external: (Product)<sup>RED</sup>, Wal-Mart Green, Susan G. Komen, LiveStrong...etc. Internal and external PR attention for Hallmark.

**Art Director : Greetings** Everyday Greetings, Hallmark (2005-2007)  
Team leadership, communication, project management, change management. Design, development and execution of Greetings segments: Sympathy, Get Well, Thinking of You, Between You and Me, Anyone's Birthday.

**Art Director : Gifts** Gifts and Celebrations, Hallmark (2001-2005)  
Extensive cross-functional coordination and communication. Design, development and execution of season programs (Thanksgiving, Holiday, Val), and high profile licensed partnership program gift product, including Maya Angelou Life Mosaic and Maxine. Travel to Asia 2x/yr to meet with vendors, source materials, processes. Overseas development or sourcing of new product as needed.

**Designer and Illustrator** Creative Product Development, Hallmark (1989-2001)  
Experience 'on the boards' with many formats: Greetings, Gifts, E-cards, Party, Gift Presentation. Demonstrated leadership. innovation, aesthetic skills and high productivity.

**Illustrator** Gibson Greeting Cards, Cincinnati, OH (1985-1989)  
Illustration for all product categories: Greeting Card, Gift Wrap, Party, Stationery, Calendars, more.

## Awards:

KC AIGA Diversity Award (6/2008) for (Product)<sup>RED</sup> greeting card design.

Hallmark Corporate Diversity's Walk the Talk Award (4/2008) for work in Mali, West Africa. Team initiated new vendor relationships, created successful product and much needed income for over 200 artisans. Ours was the largest textile export in the Malian history, and the first opportunity for Mali to benefit from the AGOA act. <http://www.hallmarkcitizenship.com/> ("supplier partnerships")

Invited to Hallmark forums: Paper Differentiation Board, Innovation Round Table, Innovation Ambassadors.

## Education:

**Miami University (Ohio) Bachelor of Fine Arts** (1985)  
Advertising and Graphic Design, minors in French and Illustration

## Digital skills:

Macintosh Creative Software: Adobe CS3/4 suite,  
Microsoft Office suite