



# LIGHTS. CAMERA. CLOTHES.

*The real secret to bringing a character to life on screen? Famed costume designer Debra McGuire.*

**T**here's a lot that goes into creating a television or film character. Screenwriters spend hours writing and re-writing dialogue to perfectly capture the heart of a role. And when the script is finished, a director must mold the actors into these carefully crafted personas. But it is the costume designer who supplies one of the most important elements: the look. The process is collaborative, but without a skilled and multifaceted costume designer, a character — even a fully developed one — will fall flat.

Critically acclaimed costume designer Debra McGuire, known for her work on countless films, including *Anchorman*, *Knocked Up* and *Superbad*, and hit TV shows such as "Friends" and "New Girl," encapsulates the perfect qualities needed for successful costume de-

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sign. Producer Jeremiah Samuels called McGuire, "one of the nicest, kindest, smartest, coolest people ever. Plus the quality of her work is outstanding, perfectly intuitive." The actors who have had the opportunity to work with McGuire echo this sentiment. Nina Dobrev, known for her role as Elena Gilbert in the CW's drama "The Vampire Diaries," said, "You know that saying, a jack-of-all-trades is the master of none? She's the opposite of that. She's a jack-of-all-trades and a master of all. I honestly believe that."

McGuire began her career designing costumes for a dance company in Paris. When the company moved to New York, she started experimenting with accessory design and eventually started her own jewelry company. After 12 years, McGuire transitioned back to clothing, designing costumes for television and film.

## So what has inspired McGuire's fashion taste over the years?

How did she get her start? What motivates her? *Eidé* Fashion Director Tian Justman sat down with McGuire on the set of the upcoming film, *Let's Be Cops*, fashionista-on-fashionista, to learn the answers to these questions and more in our exclusive interview.

***Eidé Magazine:* Tell us about your approach to fashion.**

Debra McGuire: I don't care what other people are doing. I like the fashion that comes from the heart. [I care] what it really is to have style and taste [and] not about trend.

***EM:* How did your fine arts background lead you into the world of style?**

DM: My whole career has been completely organic. It started with my girlfriend's dance company in Europe. We did a performance in New York City at The Joyce and then their company ended up moving to New York. I'd [previously] done an art show in San Francisco [where] the gallery owner asked if we would do things in other materials, other than what we worked in. So I did a series of necklaces in plexiglass and paper and paint. And then someone from a department store saw the necklaces and asked if I'd do something for the store, and then suddenly I was a jewelry designer! I was a jewelry designer for 12 years. Then when I became really successful doing that and I had the money to do other things I started doing clothes. I did small private collections and then I did a hat company for a few years in New York. After that, I kind of did a lot of things. I had a friend who was the head of a studio in California and asked if I was interested in coming out and working on a film, and I did that. And at that time I had my first

child and my parents lived in LA and I thought that might be a good thing to do. So everything has been very, very organic.

***EM:* Costuming, fashion, jewelry, fine arts — what keeps you going?**

DM: I have a meditation practice that I've had for almost 40 years. So I think that helps. And I have a very regimented, disciplined life. I don't sleep much. And I'm afraid if I stop, everything will fall apart, and I'd suddenly look my age.

***EM:* So when you're approaching a new project, how do you wrap your head around all of the characters and keep that cohesive within the costuming?**

DM: I will read a script and usually have a very clear idea of what it looks like and who these characters are. And then from the creative perspective, I do my work and I translate what that is to the people who work for me and if they've been with me for 10, 15 years — which most of them [have been] — they know exactly what I mean. Every project has a different vibe and a different requirement. So, the first thing I do is try to tailor-make the correct crew for the correct project. That's the most important thing...And part of what I love about it, and why I work so much is because if I stop doing all these projects I would lose the people that have been with me for so long...It's just like a family.

***EM:* What's been one of your favorite projects to work on?**

DM: Well, I have so many. But I have to say that "Friends" was really important. I wouldn't say it was the most enjoyable, because that was 10 years. So there were good years and bad years. But I have to say that that definitely catapulted my life to another level where I was able to do multiple projects, and have a store, and have three businesses, and have a huge amount of employees to take care of my business, and have six interns every season, and train people. So during that process I trained people who then became costumers. And there are people who have worked for me who have never worked for anybody else before. So it's kind of cool.

***EM:* What's your personal style like?**

DM: It doesn't change. My personal style is pretty much the same; it's always been the same. Seriously. Like if you look at pictures of me, probably from the time I'm five years old, I have the same style.

***EM:* Have you been enjoying your time in Atlanta?**

DM: I've basically eaten my way through Atlanta. I love the food here. I've been to The Optimist twice, I love Parish, I love everything [and] I love One Eared Stag. I think [Atlanta] has some of the most unique food in the world.