

9/30/16
BLUM SERVICE AWARD STATEMENT

My wife Lila and I came to Monmouth in 1959 right out of graduate school at Michigan State. While the Art Department at Monmouth offered courses in art history with Martha Hamilton, I recognized the need to build a studio program. It started with drawing, painting, and printmaking which I offered while we were in the Woodbine building on the corner of Broadway and 8th Street.

There weren't many places to exhibit student art work at that time except for a space in the Snack Bar in the basement of Wallace Hall. (This was before we had Stockdale Center, of course.) Unfortunately, Mrs. Azdale, who ran the Snack Bar, was not so enthusiastic about art work on "her walls." But we persevered and now we have student art work throughout the campus and most recently up on the first floor of Wallace Hall.

The art department moved to the former Nichols Hatchery building on North 9th Street in 1962 which gave us space for a sculpture program, expanded printmaking facilities, a classroom, a small art library, and an art gallery in the front which students had to walk through on their way to their classes. In 1965 George Waltershausen joined the department and developed the sculpture and photography programs. Eventually we added ceramics. The next building "upgrade" was in 1985 to the present facilities in McMichael Academic building. Cheryl Meeker joined us to teach art history and ceramics in 1986 and in 1995 Stacy Lotz came to teach sculpture.

I appreciated the benefits of Monmouth's sabbatical leave program, taking two sabbaticals to Japan. I was able to develop a deeper knowledge of Asian art which not only influenced my creative work, but allowed me to develop a course called Asian Art and Culture. This was part of a broader effort to bring about an awareness of Asian history and culture to Monmouth students which is effectively described in the current issue of Monmouth Magazine in the article on the "Global Classroom of the '60s and '70s.

During another sabbatical in NYC in the early 1980s, while Lila was a graduate student at Teachers College, Columbia, I visited Len Everett, a native of Kirkwood, who was a practicing artist and a friend of Gracie Peterson. Len's life was cut short by terminal throat cancer but his estate made bequests to several schools including Monmouth where we now have the Len Everett Gallery in the Hewes Library. I also made contact with Monmouth alum Jim Shields in NY at the recommendation of Tom Conrad, a development officer at the time. My visit with Jim led to further dialogue with Monmouth College in

which he made the decision to give his collection of over 600 art objects to the college. To accommodate the Shields Collection we needed a separate gallery and storage space equipped with display cases for the many small objects. So I wrote letters to our art student alumni asking for donations and we raised \$16,000 to build the display cases that are in the Shields Gallery today.

In 1987, the community of Monmouth received a bequest from the Grace Buchanan estate for the purposes of establishing a community art center. At that time I became very active, along with others, to ensure that Mrs. Buchanan's wishes, as stated in her will, for a **stand alone art center** were fulfilled. Jim DeYoung, Bill Wallace, and George Waltershausen were also strong advocates during the early days as the Buchanan Center became a reality and today we are proud to see that it has become a vital part of our community.

My education took place in large university art departments which might make it seem that coming to a small liberal arts college would be a huge adjustment. But to the contrary, I was delighted with the collaborative atmosphere at Monmouth and the opportunity for interactions with faculty in other disciplines, with members of the administrative staff, and even M.C. board members.

As a teacher, I've been rewarded to witness the success of many former students who have become outstanding teachers, many of them recognized for their distinguished service. (Deeks Carroll by Alonzo Stagg High School, Mary Ellen Porter by the state of Florida, Cherry Simmons, a successful h,s, teacher at West Central H.S. formerly Union H.S.) There have been many graduates working in art-related professions as well.

In my retirement I've been blessed to see the art department at Monmouth in good hands and I'm happy to be able to continue my work as an artist. In fact, I want to take this opportunity to invite you all to a retrospective show of my work at Buchanan Center in the fall of 2018 - that's two years from now. The journey continues.

Thank you very much for this honor.