

Artist finds new expression through working in pottery

By Louise Okrutsky
Staff writer

Dee Woods' involvement with pottery began as a reaction to tragedy and evolved into a triumph.

Two decades ago, Woods searched for something to help her through her grief over a death in the family.

Then Woods discovered clay.

Now the public can discover her pottery when Woods' work is among that of nine potters exhibited Thursday-Friday, Nov. 7-8, at the Townsend Hotel, 100 Townsend, south of Maple and west of Woodward in Birmingham.

"The exhibit at the Townsend is as

much about friends as anything else," Woods of Bloomfield Township said. "We're all friends. It's our third year and our pots will never have a better background."

The exhibit will also feature handwoven table linens and preserved flowers. It is open 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. Thursday and 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Friday in the hotel's Regency Room. A champagne reception will take place 7-9 p.m. Thursday. Call 642-7900.

IT WASN'T surprising that Woods, who painted watercolors while her four daughters were growing up, turned to pottery. Like the watercolor, pottery fulfilled her need to be creative.

Before her marriage, she was an interior design student at the University of Cincinnati School of Applied Arts. When her family was young, they moved frequently to meet the demands of her husband's job. By the time they settled in Bloomfield Township 21 years ago, Woods began to turn to watercolors as a way to express herself.

Eventually, Woods began to work in clay and started taking classes at the Birmingham Bloomfield Art Association, Center for Creative Studies and finally Oakland Community College, Royal Oak.

She earned a degree in ceramics from OOC in Royal Oak. While many of her credits from Cincinnati transferred to OOC, she came face to face with a few subjects she had artfully avoided.

"I had to take business math and



DAN DEAN/staff photographer

For Dee Woods of Bloomfield Township, working in pottery fulfills a need to be creative. She is among those participating in the pottery

show and sale Thursday and Friday at the Townsend Hotel in Birmingham.

accounting and all those things I tried to avoid."

THROUGH THE years, the tactile aspects of pottery continue to appeal to her. She continues to turn out a lot of hand-built things instead of relying solely on using a wheel.

As time goes on, Woods has become more interested in raku, which is mostly hand-built pottery and non-functional.

"It's a fun process. It's more spontaneous, more creative," Harking back to the days when she painted at home, the treatment of her raku work has a soft, watercolor effect.

SHE STARTED out making mostly functional pieces, a choice that's partly personal preference and part marketing decision.

"Women need to justify why they spend money," Woods, who'll only say she's over 60, became involved in shows for equally practical reasons.

"Once you start out to produce, you need an outlet."

After a while, even close friends and family members don't need any more gift pots. Her own home is filled with her work, including two favorite pieces of pottery, a teapot

and an example of her raku work.

RESPONSE To her work has been so positive that its demands approach a full-time job.

"This hobby turned into something more than I started."

She sets aside blocks of time to work in her home studio so she is prepared for her shows.

"Once you're accepted into some shows, it puts pressure on you."

Woods remains careful about committing her time.

As the grandmother of two, she wants to have enough time to play with her grandchildren.

Dee Woods' skilled hands form another piece of pottery. Her involvement with pottery began as a reaction to tragedy and evolved into a triumph.



DAN DEAN/staff photographer

Fund-raiser set for ballet documentary

A dedicated, hard-working group is taking steps on behalf of a video documentary on Enrico Cecchetti, called one of the greatest teachers in the history of ballet.

An Evening in Tribute to Maestro Enrico Cecchetti — Continuing the Ballet Tradition will take place Saturday, Feb. 1, at Meadow Brook Hall in Rochester. The elegant gala event will feature a silent and live auction, food, drinks and music.

All proceeds raised during the evening will be used to complete production of the documentary.

THE GROUP is now seeking dona-

tions for the auction and ads for the program. Contributions are tax deductible.

The documentary is being produced under the direction of Rose Marie Floyd of Troy, director of the Contemporary Civic Ballet Company in Royal Oak, and Eva Powers of Bloomfield Hills, associate professor of the Wayne State University Department of Dance.

It will be available for use by private and public performing arts organizations, such as studios, universities, libraries and cable and public television.

FOR MORE information, or to make reservations, call Michele Kemp at the WSU Department of Dance, 577-4273.

Tickets are \$50 individual, \$100

patron or \$125 benefactor. A special preview party for patrons and benefactors will take place Wednesday, Jan. 29, at the home of Dr. and Mrs. Robert Galicz.

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FARMINGTON HILLS CONDOS

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SOUTHFIELD-BIRMINGHAM SCHOOLS
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