

We are proud to present profiles of individuals who have been influential in promoting WDCC, Fine Craft, and the artists who produce it.

Here is one....

Eckels Pottery

Eckels Pottery in Bayfield WI has been a center of creativity and inspiration for 55 years. The studio and gallery were started by Bob Eckels, a trained painter and sculptor who dedicated himself to ceramics. Bob was hired in the 1950's as an art professor at nearby Northland College in Ashland WI, to start the art department that continues today. He moved his family and studio to Bayfield in 1962 where The Pot Shop has been an institution ever since.



Bob and his wife, Lucille were instrumental in forming Bayfield's art community. They recognized the potential this small, sleepy northern town could have as a thriving craft hub. The early years were challenging as tourism was still a nascent industry in Bayfield and the season was so short-basically, July and August. The creation of the Apostle Islands National Lakeshore and an influx of savvy sailors, drew more visitors to the region. Soon, artists too, were drawn to the beautiful area. These shifts combined with perseverance, saw The Pot Shop through lean years and Bayfield became the well-established arts locus that it is today.

In addition to a studio and gallery, the Eckels supported and encouraged up-and-coming potters through their apprenticeship program. Former apprentice Annette Huot-Link recalls: 'It was only four months of my life, eighteen years ago. But the experience I gained and the friendships formed during the summer of 1996 are with me to this day. I had been accepted as an apprentice to the master potter, Bob Eckels, in Bayfield, Wisconsin. I would work every day in a real pottery. I would actually sell my wares to strangers. I would learn the business and improve my skills. I couldn't have imagined a better position.'

Second generation potter, Deanna (Dede) Eckels graduated with a degree in Fine Art from University of Wisconsin, River Falls. Following college she apprenticed at a pottery in Cambridge, Massachusetts working in porcelain. Dede took Sumi painting classes and also used this technique in her apprenticeship work. She took over the business when her father died ten



Wisconsin Designer Crafts Council

1916 - 2016

years ago and continues the tradition of offering beautiful handmade pottery to the community and the influx of seasonal visitors.

Dede's pottery reflects the beauty of Bayfield, surrounded by the quiet majesty of Lake Superior, the Bayfield Peninsula, the Chequamegon Bay and the Apostle Islands. The decoration includes fishes, birds, insects and other influences from nature. All have a spiritual meaning to Dede that carries a story. From a lifetime of clay, she is a master potter, still learning.



Porcelain soup tureen, rutila stain, sgraffito design cone10



Porcelain jar, slip trail, iride glaze



Unome tea bowl, slip trail, cone10

See and learn more at:

<http://eckelspottery.com/>

Wisconsin Designer Crafts Council

1916 - 2016