

Fred Shepard

“And that’s the way the work goes, because each piece spawns another piece, spawns another piece . . . spawns another piece. There’s an interplay between the designing and the building of everything.”

Fred Shepard taught ceramic art at Murray State University from 1963 to 1999. In those days, the art department faculty had to build most of their own equipment. He built a kiln for firing the pottery that he and his students made. He loved teaching. He also created his own special line of pottery. Sometimes he used materials like copper or steel in the handles. Now that he is retired, he is able to create pottery full-time. He has a studio called Dogwood Pottery in Murray, Kentucky.

When the Kentucky Guild of Artist and Craftsmen began, they had a traveling gallery on two railroad cars. They traveled across Kentucky, sharing exhibits and presenting workshops. Fee helped set up the exhibits and demonstrations in Murray. The Guild held their first fair in Berea in 1967. Fred and other western Kentucky artists drove hundreds of miles to participate. Fred remembers that at that first fair there were no tents for the participants. They had to construct their own exhibit space using concrete blocks and slabs of wood. But it was a wonderful show, and Fred sold almost all the pieces he had brought. He came back the next year and for many years afterward. He believed in what the Guild was trying to do to help the artists and craftsmen of the Commonwealth. He appreciated their efforts to include artists in eastern and western Kentucky. He was Guild president in the 1970s and is still a member today.



How do you think a statewide organization for craftsmen might be helpful?