

Kentucky Craft History and Education Association, Inc.

**Interview with Sarah Frederick**

**September 19, 2008**

**Interview conducted by Greg Willihnganz**

FREDERICK: (chuckle) Hello Greg.

WILLIHNGANZ: This is uh, this is a terrific house. Thank you for letting us come in and talk with you about things. Could you uh, possibly...no one else has, but perhaps you can, in one sentence tell me about your career. Describe the type of work you do.

FREDERICK: In one sentence (laughter)?

WILLIHNGANZ: (laughter) As I said, no one else has, but perhaps you could...

FREDERICK: Yeah, well actually I have something fairly interesting that I wrote for it...

WILLIHNGANZ: Oh, okay (interrupting).

FREDERICK: ...that I think describes me. It's...this is written more or less at this point in my life as I look back over it. I grew up in Louisville, Kentucky, but as a young woman left for California to study art. This changed my vision of how life might be lived. I came away in love with the ceramic arts and the look and feel of California in the 50s. So, I have spent a lifetime in clay, studying further in Maine, Kentucky, and New York, Canada. Soon after graduate school I went to work for myself producing a line of decorative pottery, which was exhibited and sold nationally. Most of the important events in my life are centered around the relationship with clay and other artists.

WILLIHNGANZ: That's terrific. Even though you say you haven't done clay now in several months.

FREDERICK: Yeah, it's been sporadic for the last few Years. Because of moving, and...various things. But um I took on a project this summer, the Makers Mark: Mark of Great Art competition which was laid out to artists. And, I think a lot of people were kind of suspicious, like "what is this" and "do we really want to do this?" and "isn't it all about Makers Mark?" But I took it on as a challenge because I've been very interested in the bourbon industry and uh that part of Kentucky, Nelson and Marion County. And I've made several (bourbon?) artifacts, so I took it on, largely to get me back into the clay studio--which it did. I made a casting of, um, a very large Makers Mark bottle and carried it from there. It was kind of a joke project...had to do with Bill Samuels...who is quite a character (chuckles).

WILLIHNGANZ: To say the least (laughter).

FREDERICK: And I once had my picture made with him at Ham Days in Lebanon. He was wearing a pig mask, so I developed this product called, uh, Bill

Samuel's Very Own Ham Days Bourbon, Ninety Percent Full Proof. So, it was pretty elaborate. I had to get a label made, and uh...But, I, I learned quite a bit and I worked with a very interesting student from U of L, who was incredibly helpful to me, Bridgette Buyers, whose...um...working in ceramics at the University of Louisville. And I learned to make casting slip, I learned to make a mold which is a wonderful way to make things. I...we always scorn that. It's like "Oh, who would do that?" But, I can think of a lot of things I'd like to make that way. It would come out very fast and then I could alter them, so it's on my agenda to do that.

WILLIHNGANZ: Okay, interesting. Maybe you could uh...just uh...bring us up to speed from your childhood forward. Did you grow up...were you born in this area?

FREDERICK: I was born in this area. My father was from Louisville. I was actually...I wasn't born here. Did I say that? I was born in Manhattan, because my father was working for a Louisville Company up there. My mother's from South Carolina and Philadelphia. But we moved here when I was three, and I grew up um...I think I was pushed a little hard to be regular, or conformist, and I went a bit underground. I was a little bit rebellious. I wanted to wear different clothes than my mother wanted me to wear (coughs). And in school, I was thought of as a pretty good artist. And in high school they said that I would probably end up on the coast of Maine as, I'm not sure doing what...but. I went to a very traditional college in Virginia from high school...was really...it was a place where I should have felt comfortable but didn't, and there wasn't much art. So, halfway through I transferred to Mills College in Oakland, California, and I was just blown away by California. The climate...in the 50s it was this very much more democratic place than it probably is now; you could be somebody either wealthy or intellectual, and live next door to somebody much more usual. It just seemed like a very influx and interesting place, and of course San Francisco was really even more beautiful then than it is today. It was...so back, and uh...and I...there I could major in art, which is why I went there, and in a basic crafts class I fell upon ceramics. I mean, who grows up in the '50s thinking, "I might become a potter", or, "I might work in clay". I knew nothing about it. But, I happened to have a simply wonderful teacher who was trained at Alfred University, a kind of mecca of ceramic arts in the United States. And, he was a very charismatic Spanish, from Spanish heritage, San Francisco born, and he was just a pied piper. I just...that was it for me. There was a craft guild there of older people, who use the studio and had sales on the tennis court. The whole life of ceramics seemed...seemed interesting to me. And there was also a wonderful music department at Mills: Darius Miou, French composer, early 20th century composer, and his wife Madeline. He was on the faculty; they both were and lived there. The music...I never, (unintelligible) got a masters degree at that time, before me, but...um at Mills College. So, it was a culturally interesting place and very beautiful it was...um.

WILLIHNGANZ: We're going to have to hold off.

FREDERICK: They come up the hill (covered by train noise), so they're pulling cattle...

WILLIHNGANZ: I see.

FREDERICK: ...instead of up coming up from downtown...this is very hard for me.

WILLIHNGANZ: How many times a day do you listen to this?

FREDERICK: Well, there are 30-33 trains a day but they don't all come that way. And, its, you know...I quite...I grew up liking trains so...you...it does block your conversation. I like living near the train tracks, and if you looked out my windows you wouldn't even know they were there.

WILLIHNGANZ: Wow (laughter) that's nice. Sorry I didn't mean to interrupt you...

FREDERICK: No, I'm sorry (chuckles) where were we?

WILLIHNGANZ: Well, we were. . . Mills College.

FREDERICK: It was intellectually, visually stimulating and very beautiful. I remember especially, well...when I got there first it was summer time. And the hills were all brown, and there were many many kind of Mediterranean-type buildings, and red tile roofs, and blooming flowers, and you could have imagined you were in Italy, or on the Mediterranean, or Spain. That kind of...that's how it looked. And in the winter, when it began to rain, the hills would all turn green. You probably know this from being there.

WILLIHNGANZ: I didn't spend excessive months there.

FREDERICK: Yeah, but in winter the hills, all the big, beautiful rolling hills all turned green, it looked like Ireland or...so. I loved it, but when I graduated from there, um...my parents had given me a Volkswagen, and they had...it was an older one. It in fact had little windows for the cart in the middle, and they had brought me a picture of it and my teacher said, "Is this to let you go or bringing you home?" And actually, I was still pretty young when I graduated from college. (Unintelligible) but in knowing what to do, here I was wanting to do art, and knowing that my family probably expected something a little different from me. So, I did come home for a while. But I soon moved to Boston to live with a high school friend. I lived in Cambridge, and our landlords were artists and they helped me get a job with, in an art studio, apprenticing for some artist who worked in a building where there were two young women doing weaving and

making a living, and two young men doing furniture also. And it was like, "Oh my, there are other things you can do in art besides advertising (Unintelligible). So I met a lot of people in Boston who were working in art, and I think that was when the decision came that this was my life, and it was all on me now. How am I going to make it work? So I went to an art school one year there. I went to a school called Mass. Art. It was the Massachusetts College of Art which was a public school to train teachers...art teachers for the schools...but it had to be a kind of an off-beat place for the very good faculty, and so I was there in the ceramics department for one year. And through that, connections and the job, I had I met a lot of artists and saw how artists live. I happened to live at the very low end of the scale. I had a 25, year-old Chevrolet I think I paid \$25 for...is that possible? It's possible because this was in the late 1950's. Well, I came back to Kentucky in 1960, but employment was hard. I worked in the Jewish Community Center teaching classes, and I worked at a very upper-end museum teaching classes to children. It was just very hard, so in about 1960, a friend of mine, Debbie Newman, who was a painter who was living in New York, was also deciding to come back to Kentucky. So we set up a studio on Frankfort Avenue and had a wonderful time. And we also job-shared. We had a job that we shared at the Norton Psychiatric Clinic doing...running (Unintelligible). I would work three days a week and do two in the studio, and then it was turned around.

WILLIHNGANZ: Excuse me. I wonder. Would it be possible for us to close the windows?

FREDERICK: I think it'd make a lot of difference. To tell you the truth...

WILLIHNGANZ: Oh...

FREDERICK: There may not be one for awhile

WILLIHNGANZ: So tell me again, you were in this house, timesharing this job.

FREDERICK: Studio, yeah. We had an apartment on Frankfort Avenue, and across the street where the Grape Leaf is, that was where my studio was. And this is a little aside, but at that time there wasn't Interstate 64, and all the farm trucks came to the stock yards that way, so all the big trucks were pulled to the stock yard there at Clifton. And it was on the Railroad tracks too, so I've spend a lot of time on the tracks (laughter).

WILLIHNGANZ: (laughter).

FREDERICK: And then I married and lived on South Peterson, so I was still in Preston Hills. I grew up in the Highlands. I've lived most of life in Louisville within about three square miles.

WILLIHNGANZ: Wow.

FREDERICK: And I had thought when I came back here it would be temporary. I was really aiming to go to the southwest, but I really didn't get to Arizona and New Mexico. I did go to Montana, but I didn't get to where I thought I was going until about 2005. I hadn't been to that part of the world really. I did make a trip to Phoenix from Mill's College. But anyway...so about three years in this studio I was introduced to Louis Frederick, whom I married. He was a commercial artist and a collector, and a very talented man...a bit older than myself. I met him through Mary Alice Hadley. We married and had two children. Louis has since deceased. We were married for about 12 years. He was not an easy person to be married to, but I learned a lot. It seems like everything helps you to learn something else. I think I became...he thought I was a peasant girl, and I was really something very different, and geared to be independent. He had come from a Hungarian background and felt he was quite flamboyant, and an artist--he expected something different in a wife. So, then I began my life as a single person, and I hadn't done much art during that period, and I thought, "Uh, it must be over!" Because I had an art history professor who said that, "An artist's most vital time is in their 20's and early 30's, and if it doesn't happen then..." I don't know...he gave me the impression that my most vital time had passed, but it didn't turn out to be. I had, really...when I got back to work, I had really learned so much and first thing I did was go to Maine to study at the Haystack school one summer. Then I came back to Louisville, and had started a small studio doing some African based work. I had been at Haystack in the '70's, the summer that Nixon resigned. At a time when the Haystack school was trying to become more integrated, and they sponsored a lot of African- American students and faculty throughout most of the summer--either African-American professor or African artists. So it was very very exciting. And I had a Nigerian teacher--ceramic artist, and so I came back building kind of Tribal bowls and that kind of thing. But I happened to visit the ceramic department at the University of Louisville, which was then being run by Tom Marsh, who was a wonderful potter. And I'd known Tom for quite awhile and I thought, this is just too valuable of a resource to pass by, so I enrolled in school. And I had a young woman living with me. We didn't call them nannies then, but it was a young woman who needed a place to live, and was really willing to watch my children because the classes were in the evening. That particular...at that time the course was geared towards art teachers, so people who were already teaching schools could get a masters in ceramics, and they...and teaching ceramics could. So it was really, really interesting group of people I was with, simply wonderful three years that I spent there. Tom Marsh was trained in a very traditional way. He had studied ceramics in Japan, so it was really all about classic pottery form, (Unintelligible) pieces, it was very stimulating. When I had my graduate show, I concentrated on the plate form which I'd started making in...and the reason that interested me was as a palate to decorate, and also, that was the late '70's. You weren't here, but we had incredible winters when you were just like snowed in for days. Schools closed for weeks at a time. We had two winters like that, and I was just

blown away by the winter landscapes, so I was making porcelain plates and drawing on them with (Unintelligible) and painting, and that was a kind of vein that I really wanted to follow. And after I...when I was in graduate school thinking, I could justify this because then if I got a teaching job I would earn more. But, I went into a kind of non-traditional job actually. I took over running a clay studio at the Tom Sawyer Park, and actually I was paid incredibly little. I was a recreation...I was on a scale of Recreation Worker, but I had free rein to set up this studio in a wonderful little building which was called the Root Cellar. It was an old cement, stone barn, on the back side of Tom Sawyer. And that was a wonderful experience. I taught...I've had some really good teachers, Tom Marsh and a graduate student from Minnesota...so teaching. I had good teaching models, and I had some great students, and we put on a very large sale, a ceramic sale. We invited some more professional ceramic artists and the students all...some students signed up to work. We had semester, you might say, working towards the sale, and making work that was pottery that was appropriate for sale. So that was a big success. But really, it became very hard to work, with two children to care for at that pay scale. So um, I began to look around and think what other things I might do, and I thought maybe it'd be fun to work on Main Street. And I took a job workshop at the University of Louisville, and saw that I was qualified to do things like floral. And I was on that side of the scale, but I had signed up to do a show at a small...one of the few galleries in town, run by Fred Merida, a local artist and gallery. He now lives in Western Kentucky, but he and his wife are both artists and I was due to have a show there. In the mean time I'd signed up to take typing, and it just, I just, the show convinced me I could do it. I'd met an artist named Marcia Silverman, who was a highly professional, nationally known ceramic artist; her husband Jack Firestone was manager of the Louisville orchestra, which is what got them to Louisville and she said, I said, "How will I ever make enough money?" And Marcia said, "Sarah, if you're, if you get in the right groove, it's not a matter of making enough money, it's matter of making enough work." Which is kind of how it turned out to be and in the '70's. The people who made it, who made a lot of work were people like married couples who could come to the fair with volumes of work. And there were a lot of studios like that in the upper mid-west, like Michigan and Minnesota, where a guy would set up a studio, and young artists like myself would go there and throw all the pots, kind of (unintelligible) in England. So making enough work...So what I geared myself toward was getting into some of the big national shows where supposedly you could sell a lot work, and my stepping stones to that were the Kentucky Guild, doing the Kentucky Guild fairs which were fabulous...where I made some of my best lifetime friends...still friends...artists who many of whom who were living, back – to – the - landers who've moved to Kentucky from somewhere else because of the inexpensive land. And many of them have moved to Cincinnati, Lexington, Danville and mainly because as their children grew older they felt they needed something other than rural education. But, that was a great group of people and the craft fairs were fun, and they were pretty good for money making. And I got into my

first gallery, the Appalachian Fireside Gallery...around Jerry Workmen...a very intense person, but the kind of person one needs in the world of Fine Art.

WILLIHNGANZ: I interviewed Jerry for this.

FREDERICK: Did you?

WILLIHNGANZ: Yes I did.

FREDERICK: Yeah...

WILLIHNGANZ: Okay. I was wondering. What year did you join the Guild?

FREDERICK: Well...I had finished graduated school, so it must have been about '78 or '79.

WILLIHNGANZ: Okay.

FREDERICK: And it was about that time that I also met Wayne, who hung around (Unintelligible) a lot, and Wayne was a real star at the (Unintelligible) fairs. He just had such wonderful work. It was sculptural, you'll see. Um, so, the Guild fairs...in then...that was the really wonderful era, when Phyllis George was the Governor's wife and took on Kentucky crafts when Al and Mary Shands were coming to the (Unintelligible) fairs and buying work. And then there was the development of the Kentucky Craft Foundation. And so, I came in at a really really very good time. They were working with the state. There was, at that time I think, that it was a separate department. I'm not sure at the exact configuration, but what I knew was the Kentucky Craft Marketing Program, and I think (Unintelligible) was there from the beginning. And they had a couple of shows. I was in one of their first shows and I was still making kind of an electric kiln fire porcelain work, little vases and things like that. And I sold things to a department store chain called (Unintelligible). And so I had my first experience with getting out orders and that kind of thing. I did a few more of those at one of the markets, at that time; I had started to do a different kind of work. I had gone to a workshop in Tennessee at the Appalachian Craft Center, which was at that time a specially set up place by the Congressman from Tennessee. It's on I-40 a little bit east of Nashville, beautiful place, on a big lake, and it was designed by a woman named Susan Peterson...who's very big in crafts, a writer, and a curator. And they had an extraordinary faculty, and they had wood, ceramics, glass-blowing, and probably some fiber arts. And I studied ceramics with three fabulous teachers: Cynthia Bringle, Sandy Simon, and oh, I can never remember the other guys name, but Joe Bova, Joe Bova, who taught at LSU. And from Sandy Simon I learned to paint on pots. She had little paint brushes called Daggers Strikers that are used in the auto, in to doing auto design...that kind of thing. And she was using something called glaze stains which were ceramic grade pigments...what's



used basically at that time to make your refrigerator avocado green or harvest gold. They were products for the ceramic professional enameling and professional ceramic industry. But, she figured out how to get them and they were available to artists, so I came back and started painting on everything. I painted on bowls and porcelain, terra cotta...and it was the terra cotta...were...they seemed to go the fastest. I, I think I didn't bring upstairs. Here's the little...a little plate that's now broken. But I did all kinds of painting on big pieces, small pieces, and you'll see some of those in the slide show that I have. And it was very exciting, it was kind of um...it became the most exciting part of the work for me, the decorating. Well, I called it the romance of ceramics or something like that. It was just when I would go into the basement, I had then moved in with my children to a large 1907 frame house in Crescent Hill. I had a studio in the downstairs back porch. I rented the first floor, but I borrowed back the back porch from my tenant who'd been a student of mine at Tom Sawyer Park, and I went from there to the basement, the usual first studio in the basement. So, at this second or third Kentucky Crafts Market I went to I met so many people who said, "This is really nice, you should take this to Chicago". And was like, "Oh wow, that sounds kind of like...I'm not sure I can do that with two children and". I knew that sending around slides was...kind of like they probably got left on a desk. So it was at that time that I began to really work hard to get into the American Craft Council shows. And for me it was more of an art aide, it was kind of on the side line, an income gain. But, it turned out to be how I made a living. I went to my first big show which had lots of people that I knew from the magazines, and it was, it was scary and very exciting. This is a (unintelligible), I took everything I'd ever made practically-porcelain, terra cotta, big, small, sculptural. And a man named Jerry Williams who used to edit a magazine called Studio Pottery, I've known him in Boston because we visited his studio for my art school, and he came by and said, "Who made all of this?" (Laughter) And um, the things that sold were this, this terra cotta with this kind of matte finish that I've developed, and um...for instance, I'd always loved this wreath that my Grandmother had had of Mexican fruit, and I have one I can show you, it's downstairs. So, on this...during a summer when I was teaching a workshop in Nelson County, they had some this old fruit and I started baking fruit pieces. They were decorate...and then I decorated them, and they were really pretty nice. And I took them to the show just as kind of, well accent pieces in my display. A very, very stylishly dressed woman came in and said, looked around, she said, "Well, I'd like to have three dozen of these. I'm from the Dallas Museum of Art". So, that was kind of how it began. I came home with...I don't know about the first show, probably about \$4,000 worth of orders.

WILLIHNGANZ: Wow.

FREDERICK: Yeah.

WILLIHNGANZ: That's terrific.

FREDERICK: But that's how it worked. You took your stuff and the people were there, and it was the 80s...this was I think '84. There was a lot of money--a lot of wealth. A friend of mine told me, "Well, if you really make it, I have to tell you, you will no longer be selling to your friends, you'll be selling to wealthy people who are buying it because their partners have one" (chuckles). It, it didn't matter. It was...it was a very exciting kind of way to go because the shows were fun to do. My friend Rand Haslet, who went with me once as assistant, called us urban gypsies because we go there in our blue jeans and our overalls, and we're doing (unintelligible) work, setting up. Then, we'd change into our art clothes. And then we'd go out to a wonderful restaurant to eat in some wonderful city. So, that again was a great friend making, and work trading, and challenging. So, Marshall was right, it was about how much work you made. So my first assistant was a Brit, the brother-in-law of friends of mine who'd come for three months stay in the States--in Louisville. And he had recently trained to become a potter. So he came to work for me and he was a very, very charming fellow. He smoked a lot of cigarettes and didn't come to work 'til noon ever, but he had been trained in the British way, and he said, "Okay." My studio looked kind of like my house, full of objects and he said, "First thing we have to do is get rid of your three dimensional, your three dimensional studio, or I forget how he put it, it was funny. So we need to take all the objects away, build shelves in a kind of English fashion...which was good. Those shelves stayed in my basement right through. So, that's where my business began to grow, and I did go with a kind of low (unintelligible). I really wish I had more of it to show you, but the charm of it was the surface, this kind of matte finish surface. So these were gray stains mixed in a, mixed with slip and a little bit of flux to keep them to stay on the clay. And that's what colors the clay...and its...its permanent, and it has a kind of velvety finish which is a lot of the charm of it. So the way the main design feature came up, I can show you in the slide show, but not with this. There are little crocheted clothes and things like that that are used in many ceramic studios to stamp in clay. This texture, and because painting an image on everything I did, as I did in the beginning fruit, and you know, that was like making little canvases. So, what I began to do was just to lay a piece of, of some kind of crochet, and I have some I could show you, but they're not here right now, and then putting in a pattern and then drawing on that, and then it ended being all pattern, like this. And this was one of my...really this was my bread and butter item, this is a little...I then had a later...had an assistant who was a Berea student and she said, "Oh, Sarah, we could make oil lamps". And I said, "No way. That sounds...I didn't like the idea of making oil lamps, but we developed this way of making them with this little flower top and this pattern and this was really my big bread and butter item. I sold thousands of these, I'd have to say, over time. They got better as they went along, and this is again the crochet. And people would say "How did you do that?" And they didn't somehow recognize that it was, you know, old placemats and doilies and that kind of thing. So right through my work, there was a way that is was both thrown and hand built...a lot of jars...I really wish I had more to show you, but it's mostly gone, sold. But, many of the jars...I never had liked making lids and this came about at a Berea

craft fair. I had some, sort of bigger jars...some of the jars I'd made, and I had little lids that just plain fell off. They weren't well made. And my daughter put a green delicious apple into this jar and it looked so good. So that was something I made a lot of, these kind of, these kinds of things. And teapots made that way...and we made serving bowls...large bowls in large organic forms, which you can find in my slide show. I have a pretty good, a pretty good photographic record of those pieces. So, '84, '85, '86...in '86 I had an employee that I got by advertising in a craft magazine, and he was an Iraqi man, a young man who had left Iraq at the time of Sadaam Hussein and was not able to go back because he would have been a draft dodger and whatever. He was here for keeps, and he was between undergraduate school and graduate school and he came from a manufacturing family. He was a potter, and he really helped bring my business to another level. There were many steps that we were able to do in a more practical way. We did...we stopped hand building the large jars. We made big molds and we coiled inside so everything was still hand built, but we made everything faster. And that, that helped a lot that we could get out lots and lots of work. I went to a show in West Springfield, Massachusetts. I'm not sure exactly when that was...maybe '88--'89. And I took so many orders that I had to say sold out, because I had taken orders from...this was June through June of the next year. And then I learned there were people who wanted it even in the next year. So, at that point, you know, I was not a likely person to have come to that kind of place in my life...very shy girl...lived mostly in my head and here I am the prom queen, you know.

WILLIHNGANZ: How old were you at that point?

FREDERICK: Um...42 or 3...Yeah. I've always lived kind of a generation behind because of going to school and starting out in my forties, so I'm, I have a lot of friends in the baby boomer generation even though I'm older. Anyway, so that was great. So the way it turned out, I was really able to make a living. I was able to put a new roof on the house. I was able to buy a new car...things I never thought would be possible. And I was able to um...um...save money. I started my first account; uh what was it, a mutual fund, Yeah. So it was all good, it was um, in the, in the beginning like most things, more fun. In the beginning I had too many people working. I had to get it back to where there was one person who was throwing, one person who was doing the hand building who also did the packing, usually, and then a person in the basement who did the decorating. And then I, at that time had, had repaired a garage, an old three car frame garage in the back of my big house, and I worked out there. But, because we were busy often, somebody else had to work with me. And then, there was the management, and all the billing, the contact with customers. I actually liked my contacts with galleries. That turned out they were people like myself trying to make a living. People would say, "But you have to give them fifty percent". But hey, they're selling it for you and they pay for it to be shipped to them, so that was how it went. I have a friend named William who probably still works as a manager at the August Moon and Fong Chu. A Louisville artist, who worked for

me briefly, brought William in. I remember William in the basement packing any kind of boxes we could find with newspaper. And it got to the place that we were ordering crates, big, big stiff corrugated boxes from a place in Tennessee, Southern Indiana and they'd come in big van and we'd have to drive our pick-up truck down to the end of the alley and bring them in. And people would come into the yard and say, "Is this really a business?" You know, because it looked like a house, and then they'd go down into the basement and they'd see. So, I longed for a little time off, and I had a brief residency at a place called The Marie Anderson Center in Southern Indiana in 1990 and I was fired up for time off, time to work on my own, which I managed to get. I was accepted as a summer resident at the Archie Brae Foundation in Helena, Montana, which is a fabulous kind of mecca for ceramic artists. It's in Helena, which is kind of in the middle of not much...small, very interesting kind of granola towns...State Government is there. That was a really fabulous experience and at that point, I really longed to work by myself and...not run a business. I couldn't see any way, and I was also coming to the time when I could collect on my mutual fund, fifty-nine and a half, and so...um...I began to work towards it. From that time on, I was thinking, so it wasn't 'til 1996 that that happened, then it ended. I wrote something pretty good at that time as well, that I'll read you little parts of. Here it is. This was in a craft journal and it was called, "The Last Notes of a One Woman Band". And it was like saying thanks for the contract to advertise. I will be in Costa Rica in winter and not at the big shows. Let me get my original copy cause that one didn't print out very well, that part of my life.

"In 1984 my staff and I didn't know if we were up to the challenge of getting out the seemingly endless volume of work requested. But we got better as we went along. It was a good learning experience, figuring out how to put time consuming hand built pieces into production. I had some very talented people working for me, and have paid them well as well as the business could afford. Most of the work in the beginning, and some later, came directly from one-of-a-kind pieces I had made. It was hard to turn these things over to other people, but as it happens through many repetitions; my employees often brought beauty to the shapes and surfaces that the originals did not have. Some work didn't repeat well and had to be abandoned. At the end, we worked even more cooperative, we worked even more cooperatively with my employee's ideas and forms becoming incorporated directly into the line. This was reflected in changing the name of the business in 1993 from Sarah Frederick Pottery to the Sarah Frederick Studio Pottery. In the beginning, it seemed to me an ideal way to work with people but I gave up a good deal of responsibility and wound up having to claim some of it back. Being in business was definitely a growth experience in people skills. Some combination of people worked well. We had two marriages and several shared pets. But overall, it was very challenging to have other people in my work environment and especially to be in charge of it all."

Anyway, there's more to this, but, uh, I could see that I probably didn't have some of the skills needed. Today it would be a lot easier to be in business with Internet and so forth, and I really felt ready to end.

"I think it takes youthful energy to strategize a business like this into the next century. So for what I call the foreseeable future, my new one person band should provide enough to live on and time to work, study, and travel. This February, instead of going to Philadelphia and Baltimore, I was in Costa Rica. These were certainly some of the most intense and memorable years of my life."

And I said, "Being in a small business is a full time job, in fact it's hard to put your feet up and feel like the day is over, because it usually isn't." So...that was how that ended and I took a summer studying at Alfred University with a figurative ceramic sculptor. I did some figurative work. I persuaded him to let me into his class and that was very, very interesting.

WILLIHNGANZ: Tell me about what figurative work is.

FREDERICK: That means sculptural work about the figure.

WILLIHNGANZ: Okay, so these are more like statues than...

FREDERICK: Yes, that kind of thing. And what I learned is that very small niche of the ceramic world, you know, a lot of schools don't teach that. We in the 70s and 80s...we moved out of just pods into sculptural pods and into pure sculpture which some people do at, you know, very refined small things. Like Ron Nagel, who teaches at Mills College, now makes little cups and little things, and they're very highly colored and they sell in the four figures.

WILLIHNGANZ: Wow.

FREDERICK: So, ceramics has come that way. I'd say right now there's a resurgence of interest in, in hand made...in pots, in wood fired pots, in the earthy pots that were made in the 70s. But, figurative ceramic sculpture is, as I said, very small niche. Some schools teach it, some don't. And so there were many different kinds of people in this uh, in this workshop...about 20 from all over the country. And it was fabulous and I loved doing it. We had a good model, and Alfred's a place where you can study almost anything...probably the best ceramic library anywhere. And I thought I was pretty good at it. And my teacher seemed to be pleased with what I had done, so I came back. And at this time I'm self employed but I'm by myself, so I can go on a residency, and I can do ceramic figurative work. And that had a kind of an evolution where I'd gone as far as I could without models and going to drawing class. If you go to a drawing class, the model, the model just sits in one pose; it's not geared to see a model as a first experience in many different ways. So when I was in a residency trying to work on the figure I'd kind of come to a place, a frustrating place and I looked

out the window. And my previous high fascination with the landscape was like, "Oh I could make that, I could make that in clay". And so I went right into doing that. The next summer after that, well I got a grant from the Kentucky Foundation for Women. Go ahead and yawn, you must tired (laughter).

WILLIHNGANZ: No, no. No, I'm just...I haven't heard some of these foundations, in terms of the art world. I'm kind of interested in hearing more about them.

FREDERICK: Oh, you know the Kentucky Foundation for Women that Sally Bingham established, and I had a grant from her. Early on, she kind of solicited people. She'd said, "Well, why don't you apply for a grant?" And I said, "Well, okay". So I got a grant for uh...working on glazes. And at that time my Iraqi employee Haudi, and I, developed a piece of equipment for making certain cuts, you know, cut plates. And I wanted his technological things. So, um...I in the late 90s...I got a second grant from the Kentucky Foundation for Women. At that time it had changed, Sally had turned over leadership and it was...well, as they are set up now, they are really supporting women and...women who are disadvantaged in their life, and women who need to come up through the arts or who can somehow be helped by the arts. So, there are public action grants, and then there are now grants for women artists based on their arts. So there are kind of two different categories. The first grant of any significance after Sally Bingham's that I got was an Al Smith grant from the Kentucky Arts Council. I got that in 1991, the year I was at Archie Brae, so that gave me enough. Originally I was going to build a kiln, an extra kiln with that, but it kind of went into the daily thing, and into my resume, and into my pride, and my thanks, and uh, my gratitude to the State and to Al Smith.

WILLIHNGANZ: Now, when they made this grant to you, did they have any strings attached to it, or...

FREDERICK: No, they had, the Al Smith grant was fabulous. It seemed like a lot of money at the time--\$5,000. Now that's a small grant. It was purely based on your art; it was juried by out of state jury, five slides.

WILLIHNGANZ: Five slides?

FREDERICK: Five slides, Yeah, which is great. That's a great way you know. I, if you do it for an NEA grant I think they take twenty slides, I'm not sure. But this was five slides, so it was quite challenging to you know put your highest self into five pictures, so. And it was with the work I had been doing in the studio, all work I had done, but you know...

WILLIHNGANZ: With the ceramic work, right?

FREDERICK: All ceramic work, Yeah.

WILLIHNGANZ: It just seems to me that if you're judging it based on ceramic art, you'd actually want to see the actual ceramic work, rather than just a picture.

FREDERICK: Well, that's true, but there's been a real development photographing three dimensional work, so sometimes the slides are better than the work. I mean, I've seen pictures of work of mine that's like, a kind of not very significant piece, but a great picture. So, it's a picture show. You have to have good pictures to get into the craft, the American Craft Council shows, and it was all slides at that time until the late 90s...it was all slides. So, for a while many of us were going to a wonderful photographer in Cincinnati named Ron Forth, whose still taking pictures, I'm sure. He took beautiful pictures, and he'd give you slides and transparencies in case you wanted to be published. And because of the wonderful pictures he took, I was...I have some pictures, for several times, in Ceramics Monthly magazine. He said to me, "Well, I'm doing this vertical". And I said, "What do you mean?" "Why, I'm taking a vertical picture because that way you can get it on the covers of Ceramics Monthly." So, I didn't really want to be on the cover. It didn't...that seemed like too much. But, I did have a very nice, small article, so I was very happy about that. Oh, that's my new cell phone ring. Just let that go. I'm afraid it'll ring seven times. Okay, so...Sally Bingham's organization, or the Kentucky Foundation for Women, gave me a grant in 1998, and with that I was able to go to the Vamp Center...a wonderful art center in Canada...and work for three months towards a show I was going to have at the Swanson, then Swanson-Cralle Gallery. And in that show I had some figurative pieces and mostly the landscape work, and it was extremely well received, critically...and by artists. So that was where I was headed when I had to make this major break in my work. Two semesters of teaching, which was very exciting, but teaching takes it all away from you. It's fabulous, but I really didn't...really have much time left for work. And then I sold my house. I did a good deal of travelling in those years from 1999 'til 2005, when I sold my house. I didn't do much ceramics, the year I sold my house. I took up rug hooking which gave me some lap work to do. And then 2007 the NCECA, National Council on Education for the Ceramic Arts, met in Louisville, which was a very big deal...and I was invited to be in seven shows. So at that time I had bought this house, and it was very rough, and I was able to use it as a studio. So I worked for a year, oh that's the message tone (chuckle)...I did a lot of work. One piece I was very happy with, which I can show you...it's downstairs. Or, I can bring it up and we can look. And then as soon as that was over, I had a gig at Country Day School. And the week that was over, I had to take everything out of this house and put it in storage, and then this house was taken apart. So there was no place to work. I did work briefly at the Mary Anderson Center again, which at that time had really had...a wonderful and still does has a wonderful ceramic studio. So I was able to work up there last summer...it really wasn't like it had ended. But there came a time when I had to stop...pack up from the apartment where I was living...get all my stuff organized to come here, and all this time I was also

continuing with my rug hooking, which I can't show you. What did I do with that piece? I might have put there, here...and as you'll see in pictures of my work, its...its most of my work...my ceramic work has been about color and surface. It's not so much about the forms, though in my production life I think we had a lot of interesting forms, but it's mainly about the surface and about color. And so I was super attracted to rug hooking, which gave you access to all this wool. And it's a little traditional pattern that was one of the first pieces I made. And its very...can be very meditative work. You get a good light, and you can sit and you can watch television, listen to music, be totally...quite...which I've done a lot of recently cause...just very calming and this is uh...I have a big fascination with magnolia leaves, which are so beautiful when they fall off the trees. They, they turn a lot of different colors, so I'm making uh...a piece for someone's home, and this is my magnolia leaf Opus. I'm very interested in working in rug hooking in a pictorial way, using it more like tapestry than like, like carpet. But, since I've got back into ceramics this summer, and I did these pieces for Maker's Mark. I was working with red clay again, and I got some terrific ideas. So, I have two pieces going downstairs in my studio that...they got me quite interested, and I'm anxious to get back to them.

WILLIHNGANZ: Is there a kiln here?

FREDERICK: Well, at my other house, I had two electric kilns and a big gas kiln outside. The gas kiln I built, or had built with the help of many of the people who work for me and friends, was supposed to be for me...but for about six or seven years it was used basically by my whoever was my main ceramic thrower. First, Chris Baskins who worked for me for three years, and was a wonderful employee, and became a fabulous potter, he makes beautiful things. And then Keaton Win, a wonderful young man who teaches at Georgia, who's highly, in Georgia, highly talented--he used it. They both used it professionally, and I didn't begin to use that kiln until after I had retired the business. I had people say "You're going to retire?" And I said, "No". And they would say, "You're gonna retire, do you have a job?" (Chuckle.) And I'd say, "Yeah, I think so; I think I have a job." But I began to use the kiln then. That was part of what I was aiming at, and my original training was in high fire work with the gas, you know, fuel...atmospheric kilns, gas fired, wood fired, and I really, in my training that was ceramics at its height. In fact, I had some embarrassment with my work among potters. My friend Greg Cycle called it toaster ware because its low fired...because it's bright. Now, and then when I went to Archie Brae, it was supposed to be the mecca of high fire, Asian influenced ceramic work. There were a lot of people using the electric kiln and doing brightly colored things. I was kind of surprised. But that's the kind of change that's come in ceramics. Anything is possible now, and there are all these different categories, and some schools emphasize that kind of work. Some schools emphasize more high fire work.



WILLIHNGANZ: Now, the high fire work, does that, is that required for...or are you barred from doing bright colors with high fire work?

FREDERICK: You're limited, you're limited. The last, the last configuration of my kiln was what was called the Soda Kiln. That's the kind of salt firing. Salt firing is that heavily worked, like German jugs, and like the old jugs, early American jugs, that kind of pebbly orange peel surface, that's the kind of surface you get in salt. And it's highly valued by ceramic artists, and it's quite beautiful, like wood firing is also very beautiful. When you tell people about wood firing, they say, "Oh, it sounds so exciting," and then you show them the work and they say, "Oh, its brown." (Laughter) And potters love it; it's a kind of niche appreciation for that. It's very beautiful work, more akin to Asian, early Asian ceramics. Jack (Unintelligible) of course, do it all, paint on things, and contemporary Japanese artists are highly imaginative and do beautiful things in high fire sculptural, highly glazed. But high fire is more traditional in a Soda kiln, which is like a Salt kiln, but it uses soda, how can I explain it? Its...salt has two ingredients, and a Soda kiln only gives you one. Sorry to be so untechnical in this, but in a Soda kiln you can...I got very bright colors; blues, yellows, very nice bright colors.

WILLIHNGANZ: The salt, or the, whatever you refer to...

FREDERICK: You have different ways of getting the salt or soda into the kiln, usually it's with a kind of steel tool that you put into the kiln and dump the salt out. There are ways of, and what it does is combine with the atmosphere of the fire and it glazes the pieces. It, it, the sodium whatever in the salt adheres to the silica on the surface of the clay, and gives it a surface.

WILLIHNGANZ: Hmm...

FREDERICK: That's a poor explanation but that's the...

WILLIHNGANZ: But that gives you a hard ridges, kind of a strong surface...

FREDERICK: Yeah, it's a hard...Yeah.

WILLIHNGANZ: And it makes your pieces heavier, doesn't it?

FREDERICK: Not necessarily. No, they don't have to be heavier, uh, high fire work is just tends to be a bit heavier. I can bring some pieces up and show you.

WILLIHNGANZ: Alright, we can take the camera down and...

FREDERICK: Yeah, and look, and have a look at different kinds of work...that would be fun...

WILLIHNGANZ: Okay...

FREDERICK: So, then I began to use that kiln and I, and I sold it to a young potter, Suzy Hatcher. And she, that kiln...she has it up in her yard in Crescent Hill. And I don't have that kind of kiln now. But, I'm going to build with some friends up in (Unintelligible) of some friends who are going to build me a kiln. This was after my Rude Osolnik Award, they said we're giving, we're building this kiln for you, so...October, I think, is the target date for starting...that'd be a small kiln right outside my studio...

WILLIHNGANZ: That's terrific though...

FREDERICK: Yeah, and it'd be like my own little oven, not big. My other kiln was so big, that to load it up...and the heavy shelves and all that. I just couldn't take it on without help, and I, I'm not that productive on my own, to make enough work to fill a kiln...

WILLIHNGANZ: Do you have to get special Fire Marshal clearance or whatever for installing a kiln? I would expect it...

FREDERICK: Only if you use any gas, otherwise you do it and hope for the best.

WILLIHNGANZ: Wow...does that change your home owners insurance?

FREDERICK: I have wood stove and that's, that's cleared with my home insurance. You don't usually talk about that. There are three ceramic kilns in that, or there are four right in Crescent Hill...big ones.

WILLIHNGANZ: Wow...

FREDERICK: And usually you use propane instead of, because, the gas...that requires all kind of dealing with City, City people and it's not very reliable. It's down at certain times...you can't count on it for pressure. So...but kiln's can be fired with oil. A lot of people are using uhm, oil, cooking oil. There are all kind of ways that the burners for the kiln can be fired.

WILLIHNGANZ: Okay. Okay, um, there are questions that I'm supposed to be asking you (laughter).

FREDERICK: Okay, alright.

WILLIHNGANZ: I mean it's lovely to hear to you talk and you certainly have your history clear in your head.

FREDERICK: Yeah. I didn't talk about Rude.

WILLIHNGANZ: No and I would like you to talk about Rude. Maybe, lets just do that. Why don't you talk a little about Rude?

FREDERICK: Okay. Well I, I didn't have a lot of brush with Rude...Rude to tell you the truth. When I'd just gotten out of college and I was living at home that summer, uh, I heard there was a conference in Berea. I think it was about organizing the Kentucky Guild, and I went and I stayed...

WILLIHNGANZ: So, this would have been in 1960?

FREDERICK: No, it would have been in 1957.

WILLIHNGANZ: Oh wow.

FREDERICK: So, um yeah, it was way back and I know that I went to a meeting and sat in the back of the room, and I listened to these people, and I know one of them was Rude Osolnik. That's all I know. Soon after that, as you know, I moved to Boston, and I wasn't back in that scene for another ten or twelve years. And early on I knew Rude as a person who made very nice Danish, modern kind of wood. And over the time, when I was working in my clay business, my professional life, I, I had...I screened out a lot of the world. I just didn't know what a lot of people were doing. But...I had, in the beginning especially, I had to say no to everything. But Rude developed into a really fabulous wood artist of, you know, national significance making very, very beautiful things.

WILLIHNGANZ: Oh really.

FREDERICK: That's really about all I have to say. At one time, Joel Evans, a wood carver, wanted to get me a date with Rude...this is just shortly before he died. That didn't happen (laughter).

WILLIHNGANZ: Well (laughter)...opportunity...another road not taken.

FREDERICK: I, I know his son Joel through, from my years in Berea. I have a real fondness for Berea.

WILLIHNGANZ: Yeah, it's sort of the heart of the crafts world for this state.

FREDERICK: Yes it is. Yes it is, definitely, and I'm so glad the Artisan's Center is there.

WILLIHNGANZ: Yes, it is nice to have it there. Although, I was surprised to learn that a lot of local craft people weren't that happy with it.

FREDERICK: Well, I see, Yeah it takes, Yeah it takes...there has to be a way because people like to go to studios. There has to be a way to get that word out, and probably the Artisan's Center doesn't give it out. I know that...

WILLIHNGANZ: They do a certain amount, but they're running their own business, and it is in some ways a competition.

FREDERICK: Did they...Yeah...and the Art and Craft Foundation in the early days, I have to say they would not give out artist information at all, they didn't want any competition.

WILLIHNGANZ: Wow, how did that work?

FREDERICK: Well, they were a great sales gallery and...

WILLIHNGANZ: This is now which organization?

FREDERICK: Well, it's now the Kentucky Museum of Art and Craft. In the beginning it was called The Craft Foundation, Kentucky Foundation for Art and Craft, Kentucky Art and Craft Foundation.

WILLIHNGANZ: Okay. And they, they would market business, but they wouldn't tell you who the artist was?

FREDERICK: Yeah, they marketed...no, no, no, it wasn't that. They just didn't want to give out addresses, which is alright. You know, galleries have a right to protect their business, but they didn't...that was just, that was their policy at the time. They didn't particularly, they didn't want people to go to the studio and buy them, because they thought we would sell more cheaply, which we might have. I mean, once I became more professional, I knew that I mustn't do that. I might for my brother-in-law or my sister, but I learned not to do that because that wasn't fair. Another argument that we had in crafts in Louisville was, a gallery would say you can only sell at my gallery, which is fine for a painter, but a craft artist needs to sell lots of stuff, and you had to stand your ground on that. I'm going to sell at the Crafts Foundation gallery, and I'm going to sell at the Swanson-Cralle, where they give me shelves, where I have shelves. So, I managed to get around that, because that really...a person living in Louisville, Kentucky...and if they don't have a wider market can't make a living through one gallery and their studio really. You know, they have to rely on art fairs and a lot of travelling.

WILLIHNGANZ: Well, it surprised me the number of people that I've interviewed, who are notable artists, who were creating beautiful work, who can't support themselves on the work they create. They still got a day job to bring in some money...Yeah there is, it's...

FREDERICK: Yeah, there's a lot of that. I lucked out. I think it was being a little bit older, being desperate, having two children and no money and, and um...I think I'm good at marketing. I think that was my gift. I knew, I kind of knew the avenue in a way...the politics...and that helped.

WILLIHNGANZ: Okay. Did you ever apprentice with anyone?

FREDERICK: No, I didn't... I didn't...and when I needed help, I didn't feel I could have people for no money. The apprentice system doesn't work all that well in this country. Its...it can work if, um, if it's a single artist who is established. Like, I can mention Silvie Graniaelli who, um...is an artist living in Virginia...makes very beautiful work. She has, what might be called an apprentice. She has one person at a time. Several artists do this. John Glick does that. One artist at a time who works in the studio...they're often given a place to live in exchange for doing some grunt work and their own work. But, I needed more help that. I could let my...usually my number one employee, the person who was throwing had time, lets say in the evening to do, it seemed to be guys right straight through to do their own work. But, they were working for me during the day, because that was the need. I felt I needed to pay them because I knew what it was like to be poor. So, I paid as well as I could, ending up...this was in the 80s...paying people at the top \$10 and \$12 an hour.

WILLIHNGANZ: Wow.

FREDERICK: And, when we got really super busy in the late 80s, I devised a plan to give my employees a percentage of what I made. How did it work? Seemed like a brilliant idea. I took a certain percentage over what I earned, and gave them that...was on top of their salary. There was a percentage that they earned, to compensate them for working longer hours and really...

WILLIHNGANZ: Have you had any continuing education experiences, such as workshops, or a week or two at specialized art institutions like Penland or Arrowmont?

FREDERICK: Yes. I've been to Penland twice, and it was a wonderful experience. Once I went with Wayne. Wayne was teaching hand-building, and a friend of mine named Debbie Gruever was teaching throwing forms upstairs at Penland. And I think I was a guest artist for that, I can't remember. That was fun. And I was a guest artist for a potter named Mike Imes who taught at Penland one summer. So...and then...I went as a student in 1995 to study with

a man named Ed Everly, who is a well known ceramic artist, I guess my age or older. He's very highly thought of. He paints on pots in that really fabulous way...has a great technique. That was great, and those kinds of workshops. I recommend that everyone keep being a student. I mean even if you're a, whatever your status in life, and...a two week workshop is like half a semester, and if you can go someplace for a whole summer...most people can't get gone that much its, its wonderful. Because places like that, the Tennessee center, that experience I had very early in my career, and I was able to leave. I mean I was just doing what I could to make money at that point. That was probably in...when would that have been? Very early 80s or late 70s when I went there, and I was there like two or three months. So, I've done that. I went to Alfred...seems to me there were a couple of others, but Yeah that's, that's very important.

WILLIHNGANZ: Have you travelled in this country or overseas, and had that affected your work?

FREDERICK: I travel to look at the landscape mostly. Um, Montana was a fabulous experience, travel wise landscape wise...

WILLIHNGANZ: I've been to Helena, and I...

FREDERICK: Yeah. It just blew me away. I loved it so much. I traveled in...my other great experiences...um...traveling in Central and South America. I've been to Ecuador. Um. I've been to Mexico. My best experience in Mexico was in the state of Veracruz. I was invited as a result of my time at Banff, Canada. Mexico...our art organizations have a lot of exchange back and forth. So, from being at Banff, I was invited to salt glazing, salt kiln building workshop in Veracruz, in the state of Veracruz, where in spite of the low fire red-ware that's made everywhere in Mexico, there's a group of art potters who...um...want to do high fire work, and we built a salt kiln and we had a show. Veracruz is a fabulous unknown state. I couldn't even get post cards there...very beautiful. Jalapa the capital, they call it the Athens of Mexico. So, on the eastern edge of the mountain range in that coast, that curved coast, it's where the Olmecs were.

WILLIHNGANZ: Have you ever been to Chihuahua, to the Mada Ortiz?

FREDERICK: I haven't been to Mada Ortiz, but in my recent trip to Tuscan, and yeah, to Tuscan, I saw a lot of...and then I went to Santa Fe the next year...maybe on that same trip. Yeah. I've been to Santa Fe twice, and seen a lot there.

WILLIHNGANZ: It's fascinating to me because, uh, I've been told that their pottery...they don't do it on a wheel.

FREDERICK: No. No. It's hand built.

WILLIHNGANZ: Its all hand built? And yet you look at this and there's no way you can know its not...

FREDERICK: Yes...oh yeah...Wayne's been there.

WILLIHNGANZ: yeah, well yeah, he... in the 80s spent quite a bit of time there.

FREDERICK: He's been there...yeah, yeah, yeah.

WILLIHNGANZ: Does your work, does the function of objects play a part in your work?

FREDERICK: Well, it did in the beginning, but that was my training. And what I say about my work is that the charm of it...I think of many of these pieces was that they were functional but...I'm looking for...can't find that other one. They're functional, but they're bought because of how they looked more than their actual function. This for instance, is not really a good example of a salad bowl. It's bought, it was purchased to sit on a table and look grand.

WILLIHNGANZ: Oh, it's terrific. I think it's great.

FREDERICK: Yeah.

WILLIHNGANZ: How do you do this glazing, this gold glazing?

FREDERICK: Well this was a really lucky accident. Uh, up on Frankfort Avenue where Barbara Slowers is right now, a little ceramic shop was going out of business. And, I needed some liner glaze. That's the kind of glaze you pour on the inside of things to make it water proof. And I picked up a box of, um...Harrison Bell Wasters glaze and it just worked like crazy on the two clays I used...very, very beautiful...made in England.

WILLIHNGANZ: Yeah. It's gorgeous.

FREDERICK: Really great. Yeah. I used a lot of it on different forms.

WILLIHNGANZ: Does your work carry any sort of message: gender, race, ethnicity, spirituality, humor, environmental, political...anything like that?

FREDERICK: Well, I think of myself as a story teller. Uh so, I mean personally...I love, you know, relating stories about my life, myself, other people...things I've heard. So, I'm trying to tell a story of things I've seen. Mostly, that's landscape work. No. It doesn't carry any ethnic or spiritual message.

WILLIHNGANZ: What about this piece right here?

FREDERICK: Okay. This is a very recent piece. In the, in the early 90s I was invited to be in a show at Celestial Seasonings, and I made a bunch of teapots and glazed them, and sent them out there. And one of them was bought by Celestial Seasonings. I have always been fascinated with their boxes, and thought they were beautiful, and I had one blank left. When I did that work it drove me nearly crazy. It was so close, but I've actually come to like that kind of work. So I just, uh, glazed this one about a year ago, and it was really fun. It took months to finish...literally months. But, like I said, you know I have the time now. At the other time, I was trying to do it in the midst of twenty other things.

WILLIHNGANZ: That's terrific. Have they seen this? Do they know you've done this?

FREDERICK: Well, they bought one of my pieces from before...

WILLIHNGANZ: I was going to say, I would think they would want to buy that.

FREDERICK: Well, yeah. I think this is much nicer than the one they did buy. But, um, they're now making really homely, ordinary boxes. I don't know if you've seen, but...you can find a few of the teas in their old boxes, but they've got, they've there it's over.

WILLIHNGANZ: Really?

FREDERICK: So that was really, this was really fun and I like doing this.

WILLIHNGANZ: Is this for Lemon Zinger?

FREDERICK: Lemon Zinger. Yeah, that's it. I was very happy with the way it came out. And it's functional. It's a little heavy. But, I'll probably hold onto this. I don't have much work left. I had...I mean I'm lucky nearly was sold, but um...I uh...what was I leading towards. Anyway, I'm asked often for, um, pieces for auction, and sometimes someone...I really like...will call...liked happened recently to get something for Black Acre, ...which is uh, an organization and a place that I have connections with. So, I pulled into my collection and pulled out another little piece, and there it went.

WILLIHNGANZ: There it went.

FREDERICK: There it went...um...this piece...my earliest, I would say, professional work, was porcelain glazed in bright and colorful glazes like this bowl...made big and small bowls. But, what I've...



WILLIHNGANZ: Simply gorgeous. It really is.

FREDERICK: I know. I know beautiful color. And um, I had discovered with a friend...this sand quarry in Southern Indiana, in Elizabeth, Indiana. It was where they mined a very fine...there was a very fine bed of white silica sand, which is not the kind of sand you'd find around here...some kind of glacial deposit. It was mined and refined, and used by Colgate in their soaps, and taken down to Jeff to be used. But, they had stopped using it. I guess Colgate had closed, and so this, this sand quarry was left. And so here's this white sand, this bed of white sand with water in it...with no impurities, it was blue. These little blue ponds...it looked like the Mediterranean, so you've got this Indiana farm field, and down into the...this, uh, fabulous...so this is a piece I did...several plates. I have a photograph downstairs that I'll show you, that shows that it was a beautiful place. When somebody would come, and my friend that I went with, had a big box camera, and when the farmer might come and say, "What are you doing in here?" We'd say, "We're from the National Geographic" (laughter). That was...um...so, that's a, that's a kind of driving force for me, looking at the landscape, making...making...and you can see that in my slideshow...things I think about. I did develop, uh later, a way of working with the figure that worked for me, and that was looking at primitive art and making pieces like that, that you know, didn't have to...you didn't have to have a hand and an elbow exactly right. It was just kind of structural. I have one slide of a piece like that I made, not much but...that, that worked pretty well and I could get back into that. I love the Mexican pieces, the large figures I saw in Vera Cruz...totally awesome. I have photographs of them.

WILLIHNGANZ: Let me uh just...

FREDERICK: It's going at all times...notebooks...You'll get it in my slideshow. Why don't we put in a tape and...

WILLIHNGANZ: See if I can catch this here, I guess I can...Okay, lets do that. And, uh, you want to tell me, uh, about these?

FREDERICK: Yes. In, in the middle of, um, my production work, I did do some stone ware. So these...this is a set of dishes that was shown at Art and Craft, and just to show you tableware in general. This is a young woman from Minnesota, who I carried into the, um, dinner work show so, there are people still making really beautiful table ware. This is an early bowl I made from the same period as the little blue bowl you saw upstairs.

WILLIHNGANZ: Wow, it's pretty.

FREDERICK: And this is, uh...soda fire. This is a kind of fruit I was talking about, the Mexican fruit that's a fairly recent...

WILLIHNGANZ: Now, did you make that, the fruit?

FREDERICK: Yes. Yeah, and I made those fruit. This is a recent plate. This is a soda fired plate, um, beautiful black glaze. See this...this kind of, um, shiny surface that it has from the sodium? This is a glaze, but this was raw clay, just with a decoration, a slip decoration there. And this is a wood fired piece by Davey Reneau...this is, this is what I mean about wood. What...what you admire is this, the way the ash melts onto the piece...and the variation in color. I think wood fire would be really nice for sculpture. I think if I did more large sculpture it would be nice to have access to that kind of kiln. Here's a Wayne Mada Ortiz, not quite my Ortiz, but...He gave me this as a gift a long time ago.

WILLIHNGANZ: Wow, that's some gift.

FREDERICK: Isn't that great?

WILLIHNGANZ: That's just fabulous...Boy, that really is Mada Ortiz.

FREDERICK: Yeah. I mean, just the thought of all that. This is my latest fruit...this was an obsession I had. The box is clay, too. I saw one of these gift boxes, and I said, "If I could make that I could get a NEA grant". They don't give them out anymore. And this is a different kind of surface that I've used here. This is, uh, a surface called Terra Sigillata. It's a fine grained clay slip, colored with different oxides. I really had a lot of fun. I had to make, um...probably, let's see. This is fifteen. I probably had to make forty pieces of fruit to get fifteen that were right. The first box I made cracked in the kiln because I made a mistake, so I had to make it again.

WILLIHNGANZ: Wow. But, boy...it looks great.

FREDERICK: Yeah. I think it looks pretty good. And, um, this is uh...this is a hanging by, um...Alma Lesch...not typical of her work. She was the first Rudy Osolnik winner. And I took stitchery classes from her at the Louisville School of Art.

WILLIHNGANZ: Hmm...pretty.

FREDERICK: And I always thought that the Rude Osolnik award was for old people, and I never even thought about getting one because I thought, "Well, I'm not old enough". But, I'm probably older than a lot of people who've received 'em. Uh...you could photograph my cupboard, which is very beautiful, and full of...I mean everything in my cupboard is handmade. I don't know if there's quite enough light...but these are my dishes and teapots...

WILLIHNGANZ: And you've made all these?

FREDERICK: Oh no! No. Only here and there...I've not made that much functional work. There are things I've collected, bought, traded...

WILLIHNGANZ: Wow...interesting.

FREDERICK: This isn't very nicely arranged, but I love my new cupboards, and everything fits so beautiful in here. I should have arranged it better. There are one or two things in there I made.

WILLIHNGANZ: Which things did you make?

FREDERICK: Uh, I made this little pitcher up here, and, uh, this bowl. This is wood fired, ash... I made two bowls like that really. So, I work that way sometimes. Oh, and I have a beautiful shelf over here...you should really photograph. This shelf is awesome...and then up above too.

WILLIHNGANZ: Oh wow...Yeah, I'll get that in a second...And these are from all sorts of different artists that you've collected?

FREDERICK: Yes, uh-huh. I did the two black and white ones and the pink persimmon cup, next to one of them. I like to draw on things. The pink flamingo is where my inspiration for painting came from...that's Sandy Simon. I often use that black and white form to um...so I can draw and tell stories.

WILLIHNGANZ: Wow...these are fascinating.

FREDERICK: Yeah. I know...That's a salt glaze, the second teapot there, that's a real typical salt glaze look.

WILLIHNGANZ: Wow, look at that blue. Oh I love that handle.

FREDERICK: Yeah isn't that great? That's Silvie Granatelli, the artist I mentioned that has an apprentice.

WILLIHNGANZ: Oh my gosh.

FREDERICK: The red one was an early piece of mine, I sold little red cups like that at George Jenson in New York when I was a baby potter.

WILLIHNGANZ: What's the face?

FREDERICK: Uh it's, uh...Ron Meyers, a wonderful ceramic artist from Georgia who draws on things. He made this fabulous plate up here...the lady and the lion.

WILLIHNGANZ: Oh that one. Yes, I saw that one. Yeah, that's terrific.

FREDERICK: And that's a Picasso on the wall. Not an original, but you know, one of an edition. He worked in galleries at a pottery.

WILLIHNGANZ: I didn't know he did any pottery.

FREDERICK: He would do. Yeah, he would do one. He would do a drawing. They would make the plate and he would do a drawing, then he'd say okay, you can cast a hundred of these.

WILLIHNGANZ: Wow...neat stuff.

FREDERICK: I have to figure what to do with all this.

WILLIHNGANZ: Why do you have to do anything with it?

FREDERICK: Well, I mean I have to make a will and my children had a horrible, horrible time with their father's estate when he died. It was awful, so I have to...

WILLIHNGANZ: Oh, sorry to hear it.

FREDERICK: Yeah. They're just getting over it.

WILLIHNGANZ: Okay, great stuff.

FREDERICK: Yeah. Would you like to have some plums?

WILLIHNGANZ: (Chuckles) No, I don't think so.

FREDERICK: To take with you? You don't, I mean. I don't mean...do you like plums?

WILLIHNGANZ: Uh...I probably wouldn't eat them. Okay, well thank you so much for taking me into your house and showing me all your stuff. It's been terrific. This has been a great interview.

FREDERICK: Thank you so much. Thanks for letting me tell...