

Tim Lewis

"My art is self-taught. I am trying to make something that will last a long time, something that will be here a long time from now. I get a lot of pleasure with my work. I can't imagine doing anything else."

Born in Elliott County, Kentucky, in 1952, Tim Lewis worked as a coal truck driver until he was 35, when an accident in his truck put an abrupt end to that career. He needed to find a new line of work. He recalls that he looked around his community of Isonville, where his cousin, Minnie Adkins, and others were making a living as folk artists, and thought "I can do that." Tim had been a gifted whittler in his youth, so he tried wood carving. His first endeavor was creating unique walking canes from the trunks and root ends of small trees, especially liking to work with dogwood and maple. Although his canes were instantly popular, he wasn't satisfied. In 1989, he decided to try carving stone and made *Noah's Ark* from a lump of sandstone. He had found his niche! His carvings have been included in exhibitions from coast to coast and are represented in dozens of private and public collections, including the Smithsonian American Art Museum. In 2007, he was named *Artist of the Year* by the Folk Art Society of America. A solo retrospective exhibit of his work toured museums from Ohio to Florida for a year, ending up at the Kentucky Folk Art Center in Morehead, Kentucky for three months in 2009. His stone carvings tell stories, often Biblically inspired.