

Village artist thrives on creativity

Passion for art, willingness to work hard drive Villager Lee Edge

BY JEREMY NASH

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Ever since she can remember, Tellico Village resident Lee Edge had a desire to create.

While other kids would be playing, she remembers pretending to be an art teacher.

"I was always drawing. That's my big memory," Edge said. "Whenever I'd go visit my grandmother, they'd bring out a big tablet and I would draw. I would draw at my house all the time. Sometimes I would draw in the back of a paper bag, cut it open so I could draw on it because we didn't have paper big enough."

Seven decades later, that love for art remains as strong as ever. Edge was an art teacher for more than 30 years and taught public school classes around the country before moving with her husband, Kenneth, to Tellico Village in 2003.

She recalls in high school winning several contest awards and using allowance money to pay for Saturday art classes at Moore College of Art & Design in Philadelphia, Pa., which is Lee's hometown.

"In my senior year I was encouraged to put up a wall of art that I created either in those Saturday classes or in my high school art class," Edge said. "I have to say I didn't learn a whole lot in high school, I did a lot independently, and I ended up winning a scholarship to Moore College



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Lee Edge displays artwork during a recent meet and greet at Premier Residences at Tellico Village.

of Art & Design."

Edge graduated with highest honors at Moore College. She also has a degree from Temple University's Tyler School of Fine Arts. Over the years Edge has received several awards, is a signature member of the Tennessee Watercolor Society and the Southern Watercolor Society and exhibits artwork with the Knoxville Watercolor Society.

She said she simply loves "real art."

Adept at using various media, including pastel, acrylics and watercolor, most of Edge's artwork is representational.

"You would say I like real art in that I love

to do representational work, but by the same token I love abstraction as well," Edge said. "I find abstraction easy as a matter of fact, whereas if I try for exactitude it's more challenging, but I just love doing art, but it is work, it is hard work. It is a lot of thinking, a thought process. It's a lot of times I stop painting and I look and I examine and I even write myself notes about, 'Think about doing this there, doing that there, this needs to be darker, that needs to be lighter.' But it's like when I'm painting, but when I want to analyze I get back from the object, my painting, and I look

across the room and see what does it need? My paintings tell me what they need, if that make any sense, and I have to invent, I have to create, I have a lot of thinking."

One piece may take several hours — sometimes up to 50 hours when including the thinking process. She said she wouldn't do the work if she knew what the end result was beforehand.

"I just like to look," Edge said. "I try to observe and when we go places and do things and I find something wonderful, I photograph it. Whether we're hiking out West, I have wonderful shots of event-

ally I'll do paintings of those, or visiting foreign countries where I'm seeing things that are unique and different. Fabulous. It's absolutely wonderful, like being at the Pujili Market with the lady in the orange shawl and everything, or being in Europe whether I'm in St. Petersburg or whether I'm on the Haute Seine. I don't know if I talked about the painting I did on the Haute Seine where I was on a boat, my friend's boat, they keep a boat in Europe, and I was lucky enough to spend eight days on it in Europe. Oh my God, it was wonderful.

"I'm lucky that I have

had an opportunity to experience a lot of wonderful things in trips, and I love glass — oh my gosh, I love to paint glass and light, I love to paint light," she added. "I have a lot of interests, I don't just paint daisies all the time."

Her work is now on display at Premier Residences at Tellico Village. Plans are to have her pieces up until Aug. 17.

"Normally theme exhibits are meant for a variety of people interpreting something," Edge said. "What is out there is there's an oil stick painting, there's a painting on Yupo, at least one. Most are traditional watercolors, and I paint what inspires me at any given time. I've done portraits on commissions in watercolor. One I did on my son Andrew, which is now in possession, and one I did of my husband Ken. I just love so many subjects that I can't limit myself to just flowers or whatever. I love landscapes, I love still life, painting glass, painting portraits."

Premier recently partnered with the Art Guild of Tellico Village and Edge is the second artist to be showcased.

"The biggest thing was kind of building that bond with the Art Guild and giving our residents a bit more culture, I guess," Jennifer Krueger, Premier Residences assistant executive director, said. "I think, too, with our location

ART: Edge preparing to teach class in October

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it's not like we have art museums that we can go to. Knoxville's kind of far to go that art museum, so it's kind of nice to bring the art here, and it's nice to recognize these local artists who are absolutely amazing. With COVID everyone's been doing virtual everything and to finally get back in person and life is so cool."

Krueger said the feedback has been encouraging.

"The residents have been loving it, and each artist has their own special genre of painting," Krueger said. "... Lee, she's kind of been a lifelong artist and her works have been rec-

ognized and she's won awards. She primarily does watercolor, and so she wanted to bring just a variety of pieces to show off her talents and showcase her different skillsets."

Beginning Oct. 5, Edge will host art classes at Chota Recreation Center. More information will be posted online at www.tellicoartguild.com.

"I love teaching," Edge said. "I absolutely love being able to work with people and some of them have so well. ... You have to have that love and dedication and perseverance in order to develop your talent. I don't believe in prodigies, I believe in people who work hard."



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Lee Edge speaks with visitors during a recent meet and greet at Premier Residences at Tellico Village.

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