

An extraordinary artist, a wonderful person

By DENISE M. BARAN-UNLAND
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PLAINFIELD – Back when mixed media artist JoAnn Deck of Plainfield was still toying with the idea of painting, she took classes at community colleges and set up an art studio in her basement.

"I still remember the painting on the easel," said Tammy Deck of Westmont, JoAnn's daughter. "It was a loaf of bread cooling on a windowsill."

JoAnn struggled with the definition of artist. She could not draw and drawing did not interest her, Tammy said. Yet, Tammy added, the need to create was inherent in JoAnn and that will be obvious at JoAnn's memorial art show, running through June 30 at the Indian Prairie Public Library in Darien.

"It's the way she processed her life. It's an expression of who she was," Tammy said. "Each piece is an extraordinary visual expression, representation or reaction to contemporary life. Our lives, after all, are a collage of diverse elements and experiences. Some are sought out, some are presented by others, some [are] acquired by happenstance. Each work is a moment captured from a colorful life lived."

JoAnn's overall goal was to present herself as a professional artist. To that end, Tammy said, JoAnn also took classes and workshops in marketing, documenting her pieces and the thought process behind them and chronicling information on past exhibits and awards.

Unlike many artists, JoAnn did not work in isolation.

She was active in the Plainfield Art League, having served as its volunteer gallery staff person every Friday in 2010 and 2011, Tammy said. JoAnn also belonged to the Midwest Collage Society (membership chairperson) the Professional Art Quilt Alliance, the Naperville Art League, the Creativity Continuum at TLD Design Center & Gallery in Westmont (which Tammy owns) and – in the past – to the DuPage Art League.



JoAnn Deck of Plainfield and her 19-year-old grandkitty, Grunion

Furthermore, JoAnn taught both art and independence by example and mentored Tammy in her own artistry: art wear, Tammy said.

"She was an active participant and encourager, not just for me but others she would encounter through her groups and guilds and church," Tammy said. "She was a helper. She was a woman of faith."

JoAnn believed in her art and worked tirelessly to show it: craft shows, art galleries and – once, in 1998 – at the Naperville Art League's Riverwalk Fine Art Fair, a dream come true for JoAnn, Tammy said.

A blogger, JoAnn's plan for 2014 was to step up her online presence and increase her visibility. Tammy is now continuing her mother's dream by selling her mother's work through the JoAnn Deck Trust and donating a percentage of proceeds to art organizations her mother supported, including PAL.

JoAnn was still active in PAL, said Mike Bessler, PAL president, when she died suddenly on Dec. 29 at the age of 72. Both he and JoAnn had shared so many similar perspectives on art, he said.

"As an artist she was extraordinary," Bessler said. "As

a person, she was wonderful."

Strong and fearless; that was JoAnn, Tammy said. JoAnn's mother had died from eclampsia when JoAnn was just five; the baby JoAnn's mother was carrying also died, Tammy said. JoAnn raised two children, Tammy, and also the late Randy Deck of Chicago.

But JoAnn's legacy is her art: collages, quilts, ceramics, fused glass, digital manipulations of photos. Even the home décor reflected JoAnn's unique style, Tammy said.

In a 2008 story for The Herald-News, JoAnn said she worked intuitively; that color excited her, that she hand-dyed her fabrics; that she preferred 100 percent cotton fabrics, but occasionally melted polyesters; that her pieces weren't vintage-looking; and that all pieces were for sale, except one: a tribute collage to her stepmother.

"It helped me get through the grieving," Deck had said. "It's not a fabric collage, but a dimensional collage from things that were hers: a piece of her watch, the mirror from inside her lipstick container and her Washburn School graduation paper."

• To feature someone in "An Extraordinary Life," con-

tact Denise M. Baran-Unland at 815-280-4122 or dunland@shawmedia.com.

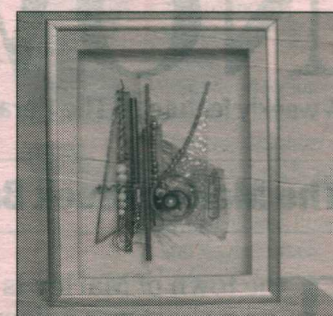


Photo provided

"Peace" which is hanging in the "Celebration of Life" exhibit with a companion piece titled "Pearls of Wisdom."

If you go

- **What:** "A Celebration of Life" memorial art show
- **When:** Through June 30
- **Where:** Indian Prairie Public Library, 401 Plainfield Road, Darien
- **Etc.:** Free and open to the public
- **Visit:** www.plainfieldartleague.org
- **Call:** For library hours, call 630-887-8760 or visit ippl.info

Bunions

Bunions often occur as enlargements or bumps on the side of the foot at the big toe joint. They are usually painful and can make shoe fitting difficult. The pain experienced with bunions can come from pressure on the bunion itself or from the bunion causing secondary problems that are painful. An example of this is a bunion that rides on top of or below the adjacent second toe. This causes painful pressure on the second toe in addition to the pain from the bunion.

Bunions form on the inside of the big toe joint because of the "drifting" of the big toe towards the smaller toes. Bunions form from abnormal forces that occur through the foot during walking. Also, there appears to be a hereditary component. Left untreated, bunions tend to get worse in regard to how deformed the big toe joint gets and also in regard to the amount of pain present. Over time, arthritis can form in the big toe joint from the bunion, resulting in decreased range of motion and increased pain in the toe joint.

Treatment usually involves removing pressure from the bunion and correcting the deformity, which has caused the pain. Anything that does not address the underlying problem that caused the bunion to form in the first place will only provide temporary relief at best. Not all bunions are created equal and it is necessary to evaluate each bunion for the corrective procedure that best suits it. If you or anyone you know suffers from this or any foot or ankle problem, please contact your foot and ankle specialist at the Foot and Ankle Health Center.



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