

From drafting board to potter's wheel

With his seasoned hands already covered with gray earthen clay, Doug Eubank dipped them into the muddy water again and continued to deftly caress the mound on the wheel. Over the hum of the motor, he spoke in a slow, steady, almost melodic pace about the pathway leading to his career.

Eubank was a sophomore drafting student at Morehead State University in Kentucky when his girlfriend, an art major, suggested that he take his first art course. Headed for a career in another direction, Eubank, who was "hanging around the art department anyway," enrolled in a drawing class that would alter the direction of his life.

He reminisces, "I really liked it, but I was so behind everybody else. They already had a year [of art study] under their belts, some two or three depending on who was in the class. But, I went home and told my parents at Christmas time that I was changing my major to art."

"What?" they said. They wanted to know how I was going to support myself. 'Teach,' I said. I signed up for seventeen credit hours, my grades improved, I became president of the student council and held down a work-study job. Then my parents thought, 'Well, I guess he's getting serious about this.' They've always been very supportive."

Eubank eventually married the art major, Molly Goggin, and spent two years in Florida following graduation. He returned to Morehead to obtain his masters degree in fine arts and took a job at Chowan College.

Continuing the narrative, Eubank relates, "I came to Chowan right out of grad school with a background in two-dimensional work, mostly drawing and painting. During the spring semester of my second year here, another Chowan professor who had always taught pottery had a time conflict and couldn't teach the course. He said, 'You're going to have to teach pottery.' I said, 'I don't know anything about pottery.' Upon his advice, I utilized the skills of a senior pottery major to lead demonstrations while I learned. I got through the semester, but knew I wanted to learn more."

"So, I decided to go to summer school in '73. I went to a craft school near Spruce Pine, N.C. called the Penland School of Crafts. I didn't have any idea, at the time, that it was such a fine place and internationally known. I enrolled in a three-week

beginning ceramics class and told the instructor, John Goodheart [current chair of the School of Art at Indiana University] that I just wanted to learn how to make pots on a wheel."

"For the first week, John had me center 25 balls of clay on a wheel each morning and another 25 after lunch. I couldn't do anything else. But, at the end of the first week I knew how to center a pot. There was no doubt about it. The second week I pulled up 50 cylinders a day in the same manner and the third week I pushed the clay out and tilted it in. I'm ever grateful to him for getting me off to a good start."

From a "good start," Eubank's work has propelled into creativity garnering the attention of professional jurors. During the past two months,

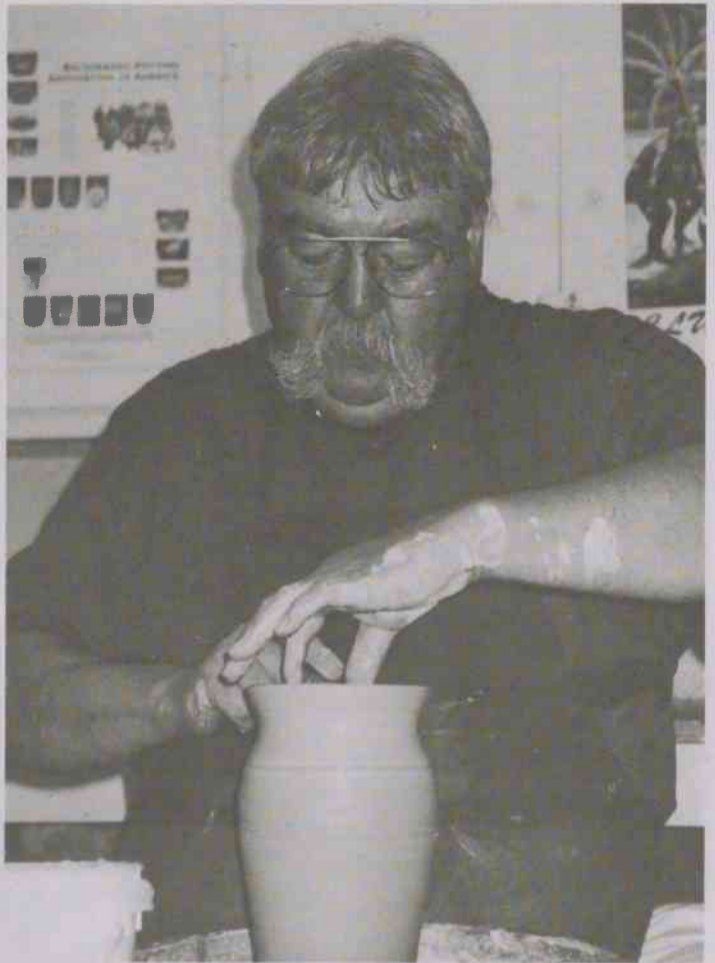
"All these years, I've never really gotten bored with wheel-thrown pottery . . . how much closer can you get to nature than right here?"

the country potter and Chowan associate professor of art has received well-deserved recognition for his unusual ceramics.

In early May, Eubank captured second place in the three-dimensional category of the Rocky Mount Art Center's 40th Annual Outdoor Art Show and National Competition in Rocky Mount N.C. with one of his unique teapots. In addition, two other Eubank teapots have been accepted into the Associated Artists of Southport 17th Annual July 4th Exhibition at the Franklin Square Gallery in Southport, N.C. The exhibit runs from July 1 to August 2.

Diverting his attention from teapots to bottles, the artist was recently thrilled when two of his slab-construction, salt-fired vessels were selected to appear in the prestigious American Craft Council Southwest Region Spotlight '97 show at the Hickory Museum of Art in Hickory, N.C. from June 21 to August 3. His circular stoneware decanters, embellished with carved designs, were selected from more than 900 entries for the show of approximately 80 pieces.

Throwing pots is not an exact science. When



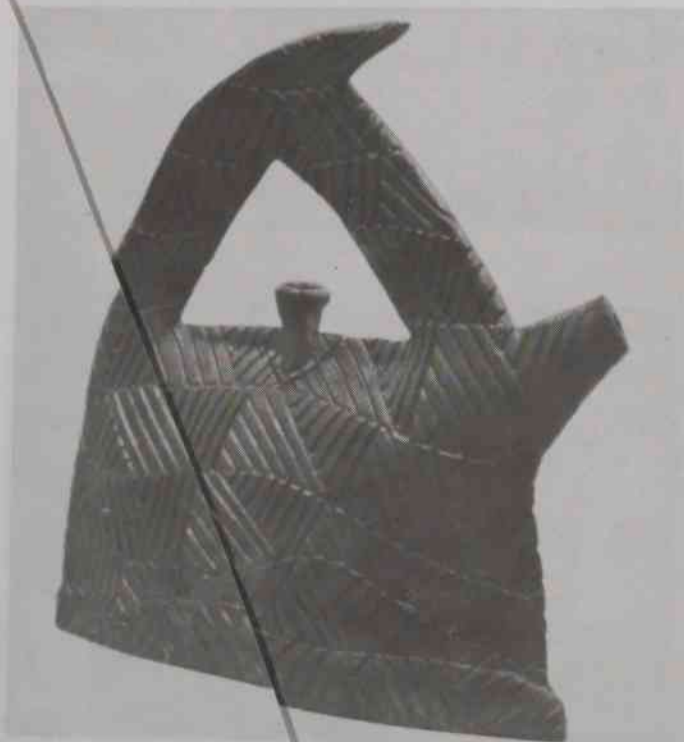
Doug Eubank, associate professor of art, skillfully shapes a turned pot in his Green Hall studio.

asked about the frustrations of a potter, Eubank takes a philosophical approach. "I look at it as having highs and lows. Some days you just hit bottom and nothing works right and then there are other days when you can't do anything wrong. You just have to ride with that."

"All these years, I've never really gotten bored with wheel-thrown pottery. I still like it." While functionality is important to Eubank, he is quick to point out, "I don't do production work and I don't do sets of anything. I do one-of-a-kind pieces and each one is different."

Humbly crediting his talents to great instructors and seven return visits to Penland School of Crafts, he recounts, "I've just been very lucky to have some of the finest clay instructors in the country."

Eubank deftly carved the bottom of the thin-walled pot he had been forming from the wheel. "How much closer can you get to nature than right here? It's very therapeutic." Eubank obviously found his niche.



Capturing second place in the three-dimensional category of the Rocky Mount Art Center's 40th Annual Outdoor Art Show and National Competition in Rocky Mount N.C. was this unique Eubank teapot.



Showcasing the art of five graduating art majors, a variety of work including pottery, painting, sculpture, drawing and graphic design was featured during the 1997 Senior Exhibit held in Green Hall Gallery. Artists included (l-r) Michael Barnhill, Rocky Mount, N.C., Kristi Canady, Wilmington, N.C., Heather Buchanan, Mayo, Fl. and LouAnne Judy, Monroe, N.C. (Kanae Shimizu, Fijisawa, Japan is not pictured.)