

## An Interview With Tamara Grayson

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and enjoy it very much for the discipline it gives me and also for the benefits of my health. I also have sometimes a little bit of an itch to paint on my own, and I'm starting to work with that a bit. But after I work with it all day, when I get home, sometimes I don't even want to look at a paintbrush. I would like a little bit more time for my own pursuits. I think I still see myself teaching many years because I enjoy it so much. I'm one of those people that were very fortunate in that the change I made was one that really fit in with my philosophy of life. I think the creative impulse is what we need to do more instead of the destructive impulse and within the art context I'm able to teach a lot of things about respect for different view points, the energy of life that connects us all, the attitude of the beauty of the world and how we ought to celebrate it, and I can do that very easily in the context of what I teach. So it's not just the courses that I teach, it's an attitude and an overall feeling of who I am and what I'm about. It's made it very congruent for me to be able to teach in this area, where there's so much natural beauty about us in the mountains, and that there's such an appreciation for grass roots, but it's also been a privilege to try to educate people to other ideas of art and what art can be and that it can be abstract and it can be realistic. There is no one right answer, and I think that's the beauty of art, that there can be 500 different solutions to a problem and they're all correct. The most exciting thing about my job is how much I have learned. I've learned more from my students than I've ever learned from any courses I have taken, because I can give them an assignment or a problem and they'll solve it in ways I've never anticipated and that fills my mind with new solutions and new ideas that then I can apply to the next time that a student has a problem, and that's very exciting.

SS: So what you're talking about mostly here is the hands-on, not the art appreciation course of looking at slides and stuff, so it must be awfully hard to test people that are learning to draw from those that have had previous experience.

TG: The way I grade is more by process instead of product. It almost had to be because you'll have a person that has achieved a huge understanding of working with the media or is able to represent subject matter and yet they

may still not be drawing technically as beautifully as someone who has a natural gift. I get more excited about the student that does not think they can draw or paint. I think that showing them that they do have the dexterity and the ability to perceive and to draw is a very exciting process and it reawakens the excitement I first felt when I went through those stages. It's like reliving it and giving that joy to someone else. So when I grade, it's more on what has this person learned; how they've solved these problems they've created for themselves, how they've learned the media, how they've understood the concepts that I've tried to teach them, how they've mastered the ability to manipulate the media to get the special effects they need.

SS: Great, I wish everyone would grade that way.

TG: I am an existentialist in my philosophy of education and that comes through in my grading and teaching because I believe more in a student-centered process rather than finished products of art. Sometimes there is not a tangible or specific way to nail down particular points or answers. It's a gray area. It's an area that involves intuition and subjective decisions.

SS: That's a lot of stuff.

TG: Yeah - that is a lot of stuff. You can take it and purify it ...

SS: Why can't I just quote ...

TG: Well, you can quote...

SS: You just pretty much wrote your own interview.

TG: Well, I get going and ...

SS: I love it. It's so passionate and you don't always find that in instructors after so many years.

TG: I've been teaching for 25 years, and I think that I love it now more than I ever have.

SS: How wonderful.

TG: I really love it. If I get jaded, aggravated, or pessimistic, it's with the paperwork, not with the teaching aspects of the job.

SS: Anything else?

TG: I think the beauty of teaching at Wilkes

is the freedom that teachers have to set the format for what they're teaching and explore the subject matter for what they're teaching in any manner that they wish. I think that's a great strength and because we have that multitude of approaches and of attitudes about the subject matter, it all creates a great texture in the fabric of our program.

## VOLLEYBALL UPDATE

By Tony Smith

The Wilkes Community College volleyball team finished the season with a bang collecting their third straight tournament championship. On November 7th the Cougars played fourteen games during five matches before winning it all.

The Cougars started out against Caldwell before moving on to the regular season champions Forsyth Tech. After losing the second match, the Cougars had to replay Caldwell in order to advance to the finals. It was a long match but Wilkes held on to win only to have to meet Forsyth Tech in the finals - and in order to win, the Cougars would have to win two matches in a row. Behind the inspirational play of Tournament MVP Chad Hayes, the Cougars stepped up their attack and came from behind to win both matches and take home the gold.

To finish off the season, several players received awards for the season as follows:

Most Improved - Davina Williams  
Most Spirited - Allison Wayne  
Most Valuable Player - Christy Riddle

Coach Smith would also like to thank the never-ending support of two former players and assistant coaches, Scotty Lambert and Richard Fink.

