

Woodworking Wayne's Love

Beauty is in the eye of the beholder, says Wayne Thompson of his almost-lost art of marquetry, creating pictures from wood and veneer.

Marquetry is a unique hobby the Kings Mountain Senior High School carpentry teacher enjoys after school for relaxation and therapy.

Thompson's workshop at home, however, is unlike the big workshop at the high school where he instructs 52 students. But on most winter evenings and on snow days from school, Thompson can be found in front of his television set in the den with his work spread out around him, exacto knife and various kinds of wood and veneer.

Proof of Wayne's artistic talents are 20 beautifully framed still lifes and landscapes which have taken him years to complete.

Wayne's favorite work of art is a windmill or gristmill scene in various shades of wood and veneer and displayed expertly in a three dimensional 12x15 frame which would enhance any decor. The intricate detail of the work features shading of trees, which is the secret of marquetry. "Beauty is in the eye of the beholder" believes Thompson and that's what marquetry is all about. Veneer doesn't come in a lot of brilliant colors so the secret is to fool the eye of the observer and the 3-D effect is achieved by using hot sand to give the shadowing effect.

Developing his own style, Thompson started reading up on the lost art six years ago and then started buying greeting cards with pictures he liked, adding his own creativeness and then began carving birds, deer, and beautiful scenes.

"I always liked working with wood even as a youngster growing up in Rutherfordton", said Thompson who came to KMSHS four years ago. He had first applied to teach math but there was an opening in carpentry. And wood-working has always been his first love.

Classes have expanded since Thompson came on staff and his students now turn out first rate buildings and one student has experimented recently in stain-glass, which is similar to cutting form and assembling as marquetry but not nearly as time-consuming. There have been other construction projects the class has been involved in.

"Marquetry is really like putting together a gig-saw puzzle", says Wayne. Cutting out the wood is the easiest part. Choosing the wood grain is important because each wood has its own characteristics and will spread and break along the grain lines. The wood has to be cut exactly but Thompson never uses patterns. Trees in his windmill art was the hardest to capture and make realistic. At first his hobby was a trial and error project but now Thompson has refined his art. Taking a large piece of veneer, Wayne illustrated how he marks off his subject and begins it with the background, carving the trees first.

Marquetry is an inexpensive hobby, but is time consuming. That's probably why it has become a lost art.

Constatine's of New York is Thompson's main source of veneer and wood, some of it coming from Central America, Africa, Australia, and the Phillipines.

He uses what he calls a window method procedure for cutting his plywood, then marks off his pictures and enlarges them. Some of his backgrounds are more intricate than others.

Because marquetry is so time consuming, Thompson has never been able to include it in the curriculum at the high school. His students cover a wide range of construction topics including country style stenciling, landscaping, drafting, architecture, interior decorating. The 52 students, including four girls, construct a building and conduct various other projects during the year.

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LOCAL ARTIST—Wayne Thompson, KMSHS carpentry teacher, above, displays his unique hobby, marquetry, creating beautiful pictures from wood and veneer, an art originated by the Egyptians.

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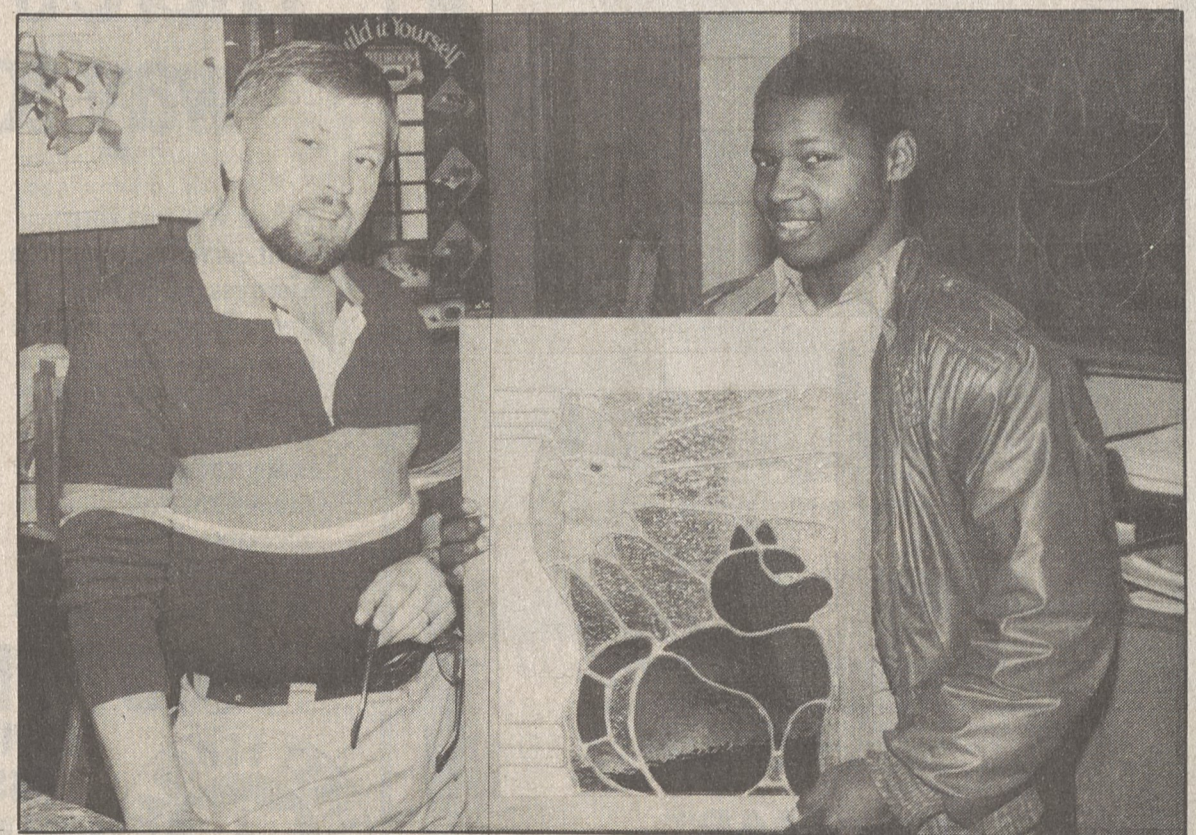
Darrin Griggs



EXAMPLES OF THOMPSON ART will be shown in an art festival in Boone this summer. The artist has captured in wood still lifes, landscapes and his favorite of all, a windmill scene, which Wayne Thompson proudly displays.



WOODWORKING SHOP AT KMSHS—Wayne Thompson, above in the woodworking shop at KMSHS, says his shop at home is quite different. At home he relaxes in front of the TV set with his exacto knife and pieces of veneer and wood. Here in the high school shop, 52 students turn out buildings and other construction projects during the year. Working on a house model, above, Thompson, left, Eric Simpson and Michael White.



STAINGLASS project of Thompson's student, John Whisnant, above, right, represents some of the work his students are doing and exhibiting in statewide competition. The staining process is similar to marquetry except that marquetry is more time-consuming. Artist Wayne Thompson is at right.