

Ninety-Year-Old Receives Wood Carvers Mel Moose Award

Catawba Valley Wood Carvers Club

HICKORY, N.C. - The Catawba Valley Wood Carvers Club announced the winner of the 2024 MEL MOOSE AWARD at its October 19th meeting, the winner is Eugene (Gene) Parham, of Hickory.

Eugene (Gene) Parham has been carving birds for 40 years, beginning in 1984. He began carving after attending Core Sound Decoy Carving Guild Competition and Show and his interest was sparked. He began as self-taught by purchasing a book and starting on his journey. He did take classes and, while not a charter member of Catawba Valley Wood Carvers, joined shortly after this club was founded in 1999.

He has been a member of this club as well as Core Sound Decoy Carving Guild and International Wildfowl Carving Association (IWCA) for decades and competed in numerous competitions locally, in various states and internationally through IWCA in Ocean City, Md. He competed in the year-long competition for International Carver of the year and was awarded Novice Carver of the Year 2007.

He has carved and competed birds of all species: ducks, songbirds, shorebirds, birds of prey, gamebirds, and more. His favorites are probably ducks in which he has carved in wood, cork, stretched canvas and buoy. His songbird favorites are bluebirds and hummingbirds. While he carves birds to sale, he loves to create pieces for his family and friends.

Additionally, Gene loves to share his talent with others. He has taught carving classes through Catawba Valley

Community College, the City of Newton, at his home, and in other locations such as senior living villages and have also taught classes at private schools. He and his wife (Beth) were Artists in Residents in Blowing Rock with their birds, displaying their birds and sharing their carving talent for a week

Gene also has been at the Catawba Science Center numerous times over the years, captured in the Hickory Daily Record at various times, sharing this carving talent and birds to help educate people on the waterfowl history and introduce people to the art of carving in wood.

At 90 years of age, Gene still carves birds of various species and in various artforms from realistic detailed carving to idealized, from full-sized to miniature and more.

The club consists of about 40 Hickory-area woodcarvers of all skill levels, from hobbyist to professionals. The club meets on the third Saturday of each month at the Klingspor's Woodworking Shop.