

## Anniversary Profiles Ron Kent, Member #17



### **What motivated you to join the fledgling AAW?**

Desire to share experiences and friendship with fellow enthusiasts; hopes to see them from time-to-time...and, yes, to let them know who and what I am...to engage in friendly competition (in the sense that when you see two sail-boats going the same direction, they're racing).

### **When you look at your pieces from 1986, what do you see?**

Best described by what goes through my mind: Omigod, how did I ever do that? Pure luck! I could never do that again.



In the thirty weeks leading up to AAW's 30th Anniversary Symposium in Atlanta, we will be sharing the stories of members who joined in 1986 and are still members today. We hope you enjoy their memories and insights!

Click [here](#) to view profiles online.

### **About Ron Kent**



*Translucent Vessel, 2006  
Norfolk Island Pine, 7.5" x 11"  
AAW Permanent Collection  
Gift of the artist.*

Best known for his translucent bowls made of Norfolk Island pine, Ron Kent was running his own investment company in Hawai'i when he took up turning. In 1975 his wife Myra gave him an inexpensive lathe for Christmas. Not wanting to seem unappreciative, he walked down to the beach and found a piece of driftwood. Fitting it on the lathe, he turned a form from it with a sharpened screwdriver.

Kent's work is in the collections of the Bishop Museum (Honolulu, Hawai'i), the Hawai'i State Art Museum, the High Museum of

**If you could give your 30-years-younger self some advice about being a turner what would you say?**

Spend less time (and money) on fancy tools and new gadgets...more time standing in front of your lathe.

**Who or what was your greatest teacher?**

Probably learned more from Tom Fortenbery than any other one person...

**What was your funniest turning moment?**

Did some creative exploration in erotic art-turning. Aesthetic, decidedly not pornographic. Exhibited and sold at local art fairs and had some hilarious discussions and interactions with many fairgoers.

**What was your happiest turning moment?**

That would be the time I turned a totally perfect, flawless bowl out of a magnificent burl. (Well, it would have been, if it had ever happened!) How about we drop "happiest" and consider "very happy moments?" Even then there were far too many of those to allow a meaningful answer.

**What is your favorite wood and why?**

No contest: Norfolk (Island) Pine! **Reason #4** is how "friendly" it is to work with. Cuts like butter from the week the tree came down through months later after heavy spalting has set in. Spalting: That's **Reason #3**. There is none during the first days and weeks after the tree was cut...the wood is a dusty-amber yellow. First spalt highlights appear quickly, and almost as quickly the entire log may develop a dramatic tortoise-shell appearance. **Reason #2** for me, is the knots and the potential they offer for aesthetic creativity. **Reason #1**: Translucence...at its best the finished vessel resembles vitrified honey...at its worst it is only awesome.

**What do you see as the biggest change in the field?** It has become not only recognized and respectable, but even broadly admired.

**If you couldn't be a woodturner, what would you do instead?**

Funny you should ask. After nearly forty years of turning I was indeed forced to leave turning due to age-related problems, so the question, for me, is not hypothetical...not what would I do, but what I am doing. After a broad range of artistic exploration I am currently learning to create aesthetically pleasing hand-made merino wool felt.

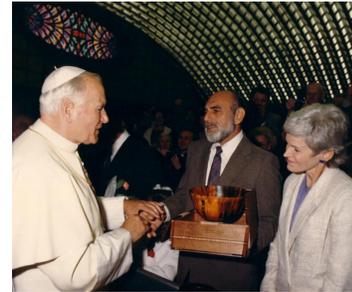
**Has being a part of AAW affected your life and work? How?**

Please see my answer to question #1...AAW membership has been everything I hoped for and expected.

**What's your favorite piece?**

Long story here, but don't want to start another elephant this close to closing. *(Image below)*

Art (Atlanta, Georgia), the Honolulu Museum of Art, the Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York City), Musée des Arts Décoratifs (Paris) and the Smithsonian American Art Museum (Washington, D. C.). Born in Chicago in 1931, Ron Kent currently lives in Honolulu, Hawai'i. Kent has presented his works to the Pope-- and to three US presidents and two supreme court justices, as well as Emperor Akihito of Japan. *(Source: Wikipedia)*



*Kent has presented his works to the Pope and to three US presidents and two supreme court justices, as well as Emperor Akihito of Japan. Shown above with his wife, Myra, and Pope John Paul II.*



*With President and Mrs. Clinton*



*Norfolk Island pine vessel, undated, 7" x 15"*

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Post-Nuclear Series, 2008  
*Ron Kent with Myra Kent*  
Norfolk Island pine, copper wire  
8 7/8" x 9 7/8"  
Yale University Art Gallery  
Ruth and David Waterbury Collection  
photo: Robert Fogt

**Favorite piece turned by another artist?**

Changes every time I see a new exhibition...or read latest copy of *American Woodturner*.

**You can see more of Ron Kent's work at**  
[www.ronkent.com](http://www.ronkent.com)

Photographs courtesy of the artist or the AAW unless otherwise noted.

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