

Anniversary Profiles Eldon Rebhorn Member #371



What motivated you to join the fledgling AAW?

I had been turning for nearly 35 years before the founding of AAW; I bought my Shopsmith upon employment immediately after graduation from high school in 1952. I taught junior high woodworking for eight years and completed a master's degree with a qualifying theses titled "Woodturning Project Design and Development" (1963). The review of literature revealed a minimum of published material (almost nil) on contemporary design. The theses formed the foundation for my 1970 book "Woodturning" which focused on contemporary project design.



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!

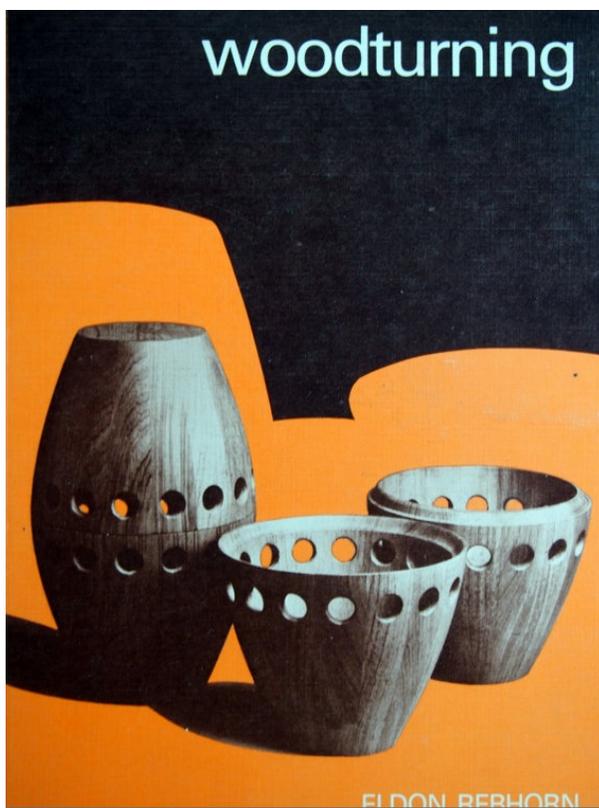
Click [here](#) to read this and other profiles online.

About Eldon Rebhorn

Raised on a farm in Kane County, Illinois, Eldon Rebhorn was born in the midst of the Great Depression. Now in his early eighties, he has worked with wood for more than seven decades: equipped with a jack-knife, he carved his first chain at the tender age of eight or so.

Eldon studied Industrial Arts at the Northern Illinois State Teachers College in DeKalb, and taught junior high woodworking. In 1955, he received the Moses Trophy, the top national leadership award from 4-H. During those years he married his sweetheart, Marilyn; they went on to have three sons. (Eldon was widowed in 2007; he and Marilyn were married more than 50 years.)

After earning a master's degree, Eldon became a professor in technology education. In 2015, now a



This book was directed to school audiences as there were no networks or outreach programs. AAW was greatly welcomed some 18 years later.

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

With the influences of James Prestini and Bob Stocksdale on the earliest of my work, one cannot distinguish which of my pieces were made in the 60s compared to recent objects.

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

With over 30 (60+) years experience, my advice is to be creative and develop a sense of "seeing" qualities of design.

Who or what was your greatest teacher?

In 1952, instruction for me was to learn from the Shopsmith book. In college studies I came across references to James Prestini and Bob Stocksdale. I have photos and personal letters (1966) from each, granting permission to use their photos in my book.

What was your happiest turning moment?

Some of my happiest memories have been seeing my eighth grade students winning regional awards for their turnings.

What is your favorite tool/wood and why?

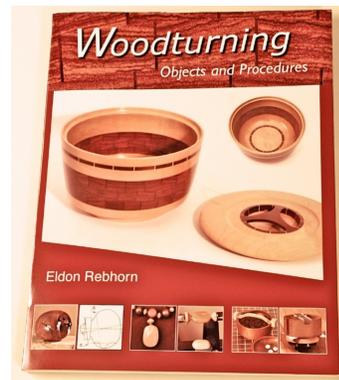
I have turned over 150 different woods. I pick based on use, color, texture, and blending with other woods in my pieces.

professor emeritus in the College of Technology at Indiana State, Eldon was recognized with the Legendary Leader award for significant contributions in the field of vocational and technical education. He was a dedicated teacher, and a respected one: Gary Wynn, a former student, remarked that "Dr. Rebhorn was my advisor when I was there at ISU. He got me through my first teaching years."



At ISU, after receiving the Legendary Leadership award

Eldon reached many aspiring woodturning students through the publication of his book, "Woodturning", in 1970. He is working on a new book now, "Woodturning: Objects and Procedures," expected to be out later this year through [AuthorHouse](#) press.



An active woodworker, Eldon lives in Franklin, Indiana, where he continues his lifelong love affair with wood.

Learn more:

An [article](#) on Eldon's carving group.

~Tib Shaw



What do you see as the biggest change in the field?

The biggest and most welcome change has been the communication network of the two woodturning organizations founded in '86! [AAW and Center for Art in Wood.] That influence reaches across the world to many woodturners.

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

I also do woodcarving; I started carving at about 8 years of age. I blend a lot of carving into my wood-turned objects.

Do you still have *American Woodturner* back issues? Where do you keep them?

I have most all of the *American Woodturner* journals including Vol.1, No.1. They are in my home library.

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

Dedication to my career as a teacher and professor has dominated my life for 40 years, while woodturning has been an avocational activity. Regarding AAW, the publications have had a big impact; I have looked forward to each issue and have many of the books. Those conferences that I have been able to attend afforded a great chance to meet the turners and see the demos.

What's your favorite project/piece?

One of my favorite turnings goes back to this large, squared-off korina wood tray made in 1959.

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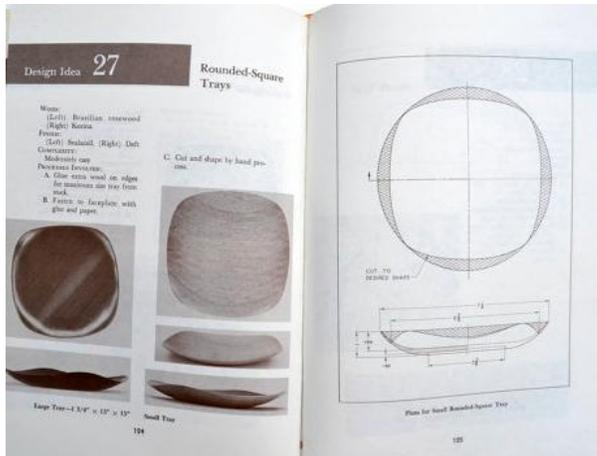


A searchable online index helps you locate specific content from our digital library of thirty years of *American Woodturner* journal. Visit tiny.cc/AWIndex



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From "Woodturning" by Eldon Rebhorn

A recent favorite turning is a wedding present for my grandson and his bride. It's titled "A Hint of Mondrian". Each of the seven kinds of wood used are natural in color. (If you are not familiar with artist Piet Mondrian, check out this [website](#).)



Favorite piece by another turner?

All of the turnings by the late Bob Stocksdale would be favorites. If you ever get a chance to see a live exhibit of his work, don't miss it; there are also books, even recent ones, on his works.



Two Bob Stocksdale pieces are in the AAW's Permanent Collection. Above, a black acacia bowl from the 1960s, donated by his wife, Kay Sekimaki. Below, a teak salad bowl donated by Norman and Nora Stevens.



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