

## Anniversary Profiles

### George Van Dyke

### Member #233



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

In the late 70s I began working with wood as a hobby and was active in the Washington Woodworkers Guild in the Washington, D.C. area. A while later, someone loaned me a Sears Craftsman lathe and I started turning out of curiosity. At around that time the AAW was forming. There was a meeting in the DC area, and I hosted two of the guest artists in my home. I was hooked, and joined AAW shortly after that.

I dove in headfirst and turning became a passion, with demonstrations and weekend sessions including some at David Ellsworth's home. A highlight of that time was a hands-on program with Bob Stocksdale. A hearty group of us packed up our lathes and set up in a fellow member's driveway. I had graduated to a new Rockwell by then and had learned how much I had to learn. I have since converted that lathe to a buffing station.



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 George Van Dyke**

George Van Dyke's woodturnings and his life story reflect a man of many interests. After graduating from Montana State University in 1969 with a degree in zoology, he served in intelligence in Thailand during the Vietnam War. He'd married his high school sweetheart Trudi before shipping out, and together they returned to Montana, where George finished a master's degree, also in zoology. He started as a research technician at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C., but soon hopped over to an exciting emerging new field: computers.

After a while, woodworking took a back seat to raising his family (a son and twin daughters, now on their own) and running road races and triathlons.

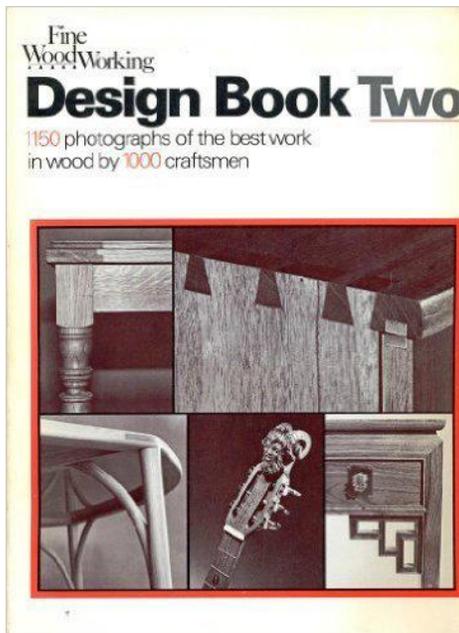
The years passed and the



*Natural-edge bowl turned from wood salvaged from power line clearing*

**What was your happiest turning moment?**

My first really exciting moment came when a holly plate was accepted and published in the *Fine Woodworking's* second biennial design book. It was later bought by someone who is now a very well-known collector and supporter of the turning arts.



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

When I look back at the early pieces that I turned, I see screw holes and bits of glue still present on the foot, really ugly and heavy looking. But it was a start. Soon I made a jig out plywood and carriage bolts that I could use to finish the bottoms so things did improve!



*George turned this boxelder piece as a wedding gift*

kids grew up, and when the once-aspiring zoologist retired from his job as the Smithsonian Institution's Director of IT Operations and Chief Information Officer, he was ready to get behind the lathe. He and Trudi purchased a retirement home with plenty of room for the studio that holds George's Oneway today.



George has worked with a number of different materials and forms, and his works have been shown in group and solo shows in Virginia and Maryland. He is a member of the [The Woodturners of the Virginias](#), and a past member of the [Capital Area Woodturners](#). He is currently represented by [Shooting Star Gallery](#) in Cape Charles, Virginia.



*From the series "Road Kill," for which George used salvaged wood from road construction sites. He used five-minute epoxy mixed with red acrylic paint to fill the voids, and notes that the series sold well*

He and Trudi live in Woodstock, Virginia, on a small farm in the Shenandoah Valley, with an ample supply of walnut trees.

~Tib Shaw

### What is your favorite wood and why?

My favorite wood is probably maple or walnut crotches, and with our many-acre property in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia there is plenty of walnut to choose from.



*Walnut sushi server with hand-thrown dipping dishes*

### Favorite tool?

I cannot say that I have a favorite tool, although the five or six bowl gouges that I have do come to the top of the list.



*Tiered dish with an ebony finial, made with maple cut-offs from the lumberyard*

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

The biggest evolution in turning, in my opinion, is the transition to more sculptural and abstract pieces. I confess that it is sometimes hard to recognize the turning aspect in the art. There are also more combinations of materials and techniques. I have begun exploring ceramics and am experimenting with combining wood and clay in my work.

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*An experiment in combining wood and clay*

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