

Kentucky Craft History and Education Association, Inc.

Interview with David Glenn

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Interview conducted by Greg Willihnganz

WILLIHNGANZ: If you will, my interview style is I sometimes make statements and tell you a little bit of what I am thinking about . . .

GLENN: Okay.

WILLIHNGANZ: . . . particularly things to try and inspire you to . . . *[Glenn laughs]* to comment on things, but . . . okay let's . . . let's talk a little bit about your history as a crafts person . . . and . . . what you've done . . . when did you begin your particular craft or art work?

GLENN: I've been telling people that as far as I'm concerned I think I was ten or twelve years old and worked in my basement where my father had all the tools that you could want. He was a hobby woodworker and I just piddled at that time but, when I was in high school, I made my senior physics project out of wood and, and I think I was a junior when I made the mathematical shapes cones, spheres, cubes out of wood, because we were trying to decide if you cut a plan . . . passed a plane through a sphere, what was the shape, or a plane through a cone, what was the shape? So I'd made these out of pieces, took them to school, and we'd put a piece of paper between the two pieces of wood and draw the outline, and I'd ask the person, "now, now can you see what this is?" So that's where I say I, I first started. The first decent piece of furniture I made was during my senior year that my school changed . . . prior to that to two semesters. So I had the Christmas holidays off and my s . . . in my senior year I had nothing that carried over from the first semester to the second semester, so in twenty days I had talked to my father and I said, "I have to do something, I don't know what it is." So I ended up starting a table. I still have it. I didn't finish the table until the end of the year, and I put it in the attic, because every time I came home on leave from the Navy, I'd clean the table up put more shellac on it put it back upstairs and I finish finished it when I got out of the navy three years later. But that's what I claim as my woodworking background. I was never formerly taught. Apparently, when you grow up with something it's part of your environment and you pick it up that way, which I firmly believe. My grandfather was a hobby woodworker – all – as well as my father. I have some of my grandfather's tools, some of my father's tools, and I have accumulated some of my own tools, so, I claim to be a lathe person – wood lathe, more than anything else, and I do that all over town, because people know that I make little pieces that go primarily on Victorian furniture, little mushrooms, or plumb-bob type pieces, small pieces. It irks me to see a Victorian piece with one or two little mushroom pieces missing so, I don't mind doing that. I do that a lot, because it – that's fun. I don't want to make a hundred of them, but I – one or two is fine, I'm, that puts the piece back together. But that's kind of where I claim my, got my woodwork in, in what I do. But . . .

WILLIHNGANZ: Did you get training, formal training in . . . carpentry?

GLENN: Only one time, at Berea, I was fortunate enough to take a c . . . weekend course with Rude Osolnik and Doctor Hall and it was three days, to turn bowls and I think that that was in 1980. But other than that, I have had no formal training at all.

WILLIHNGANZ: Whoa!

GLENN: But I, I'm . . . my history is, I was fascinated by mechanical things, and I remember taking things apart and trying to put them back together. I, I can't imagine that I can learn over a video, because one thing is I've never tried it, but I've learned to do things by just trying and trying, and trying, and trying. You make mistakes, but you learn from your mistakes. You read, keep going, learn from your mistakes, and just keep on going, and that's exactly what I've done, I think for the years that I have been woodworking.

WILLIHNGANZ: Are there particular things that you've done, pieces that you've made that have been . . . been very important to you and have changed your whole craft?

GLENN: Huh f-f-f-f, the . . . table I made when I was in college I still have, it w . . . it was a, a copy of the table my father made and when I had mentioned this to him, at that time, he said, "well," he, he questioned me and he asked me if I really wanted to do that, and I said "well, that's what, that's what I want to do." So he said, "Well, let's go down in the basement because there is a package with exactly those pieces pre cut down there, or the blanks." Because when he made his table, he was going to make two, which he did not. So I had his table to use for an example, and large cut pieces to make all the others parts out of, and that's h . . . how that came about. The only other large things I've made are two Kaleidoscopes and both have been to Berea . . . I still have both, I don't know what in the world I'm ever going to do with them. One went to, to Owensboro for a show for about thirty days. It's on a table, so that children can see it. It has a child's viewing side and an adult's viewing side with a crank that turns the internals . . . available to the . . . adult, not the child. The first one was mo . . . nothing more than a megaphone on a stand and the children had trouble getting up to it, and turning the knob and dama . . . they damaged it, but it's repairable, but . . . when I made the second one that, that one was the one that was made primarily for children. The rest of the things I've made are, I made a few things from each of my children, bookcases, but not a lot of other big pieces. I don't do much custom work because it's just hard to do.

WILLIHNGANZ: So has the woodwork or the wood working in the . . . the furniture building you've done, has that been your a . . . employment?

GLENN: Oh I, I joke with people. I said, I used to have a job *[Glenn laughs]*. I worked for Standard Oil for a while. They became Chevron Oil, and at the last, Chevron moved everybody from here – most everybody from here to California.

And, as you know, when a big corporation moves people to halfway across the country, the end result is partly what they hope that some of the people won't go, so they get rid of them. So when I asked what my options were, they said, "If you'll be here in the morning, we'll terminate you. So, when I came home, I was all upset and I cried a little bit, but I started woodworking and found out that I really did like it. And for the most part, I've been woodworking since. I've ha . . . I had two other jobs, but they didn't last very long, but I've been woodworking. And, as a result of working fifteen years for oil companies, I'm partly retired, whatever that means, but I'm not totally retired. I am now, but I, for a while there, I had some income coming in from working fifteen years. But . . . that's basically what I do.

WILLIHNGANZ: How long have you been devoting yourself pretty much to the woodwork?

GLENN: Since about 1980. I entered the state fair and, in many categories as, as many as I could, and I won enough ribbons to make me happy, but I, at that point I decided I couldn't enter the state fair anymore, because the rules said that was a hobby woodworking, and I thought if they questioned me I would not be considered a hobby person. But at that time, I was fully involved with art shows.

WILLIHNGANZ: Mm-mm, okay. Have you . . . basically won awards for your work, other than the state fair?

GLENN: H-a-ah . . . f-o-o-o, I'm sure I must have but I can't think [*Glenn laughs*] of any right now.

WILLIHNGANZ: Okay.

GLENN: . . . I, I just finished a two weeks, or ten days ago going to the Saint James Court Art Show and that was my thirty-seventh consecutive year of doing that, and for whatever that's worth, I'm the oldest person that is continuously exhibited without a break in the exhibiting, and other people have . . . are, are older than I am, but they might have worked for General Electric, or Ford, or International Harvester, or some company like that where they were here, they were transferred out, they came back and got into the Saint James. They were here for three or four years and went back out and came back and worked – got back in to Saint James, so that's okay too. But, I have been fortunate to be here every single minute of that show that I needed to be here. But I do . . . I haven't got [*Glenn laughs*] any awards other than a piece of paper that said I'm . . . pretty old.

WILLIHNGANZ: Well that's, that's very impressive. I can't resist . . . asking you what you think of this piece right here. We . . . just picked this up at the Saint James Art Fair, its marquetry.

GLENN: Is it marquetry?

WILLIHNGANZ: Yeah.

GLENN: Well I just think that's exquisite.

WILLIHNGANZ: Yeah, we thought it was pretty amazing. It's got twenty-eight different kinds of wood, and . . . it's got mother-of-pearl, and abalone and mica, and a bunch of other things. It's a pretty amazing piece. We've never bought a piece of marquetry before. But this just really, and I just *[unintelligible]* . . .

GLENN: Well, I did marquetry about thirty years ago, because it fascinated me and after I did several pieces of marquetry, it's like quite a few other woodworking things, once I learned a little bit about it and did some of it, I said, I don't want to do that anymore, because a person like this knows how to do it and does it well and I've satisfied myself that it's not easy, and I just don't have any interest in doing that. I know somebody can do that, but it doesn't in . . . it doesn't interest me. But that is beautiful, a . . . absolutely. It looks like a photograph from here.

WILLIHNGANZ: Yeah, it's kind of amazing when you look at it close up, and the pieces, the wood pieces are actually about a thirty second of an inch . . .

GLENN: Yeah.

WILLIHNGANZ: . . . and that, and then . . .

GLENN: That's what we w . . .

WILLIHNGANZ: . . . they just put them on and glue them on there.

GLENN: . . . we work with.

WILLIHNGANZ: Whoa! That's just amazing to me. Then, when you do something like this, do you then cut out the whole and then put that in there, or is it just all fitted in?

GLENN: I think that's all f . . . fit, every pieces fit in, cut individually from a master picture diagram drawing . . .

WILLIHNGANZ: Well . . .

GLENN: . . . it's quite complicated.

WILLIHNGANZ: Yeah, I *[unintelligible]*.

GLENN: The other part of it is, it, once you make the pieces, you have to get it, what I call, flat-flat, and I don't, and I don't mean partially flat, I mean all of it flat, because if it, it, one thirty-second of an inch thick, you have no room for error.

WILLIHNGANZ: Right.

GLENN: If you got a buckle, you will cut right through it, if you sand it or try to . . .

WILLIHNGANZ: Right.

GLENN: . . . finish it, and then it won't look right, if it's rippled, and that, that looks just as flat as a piece of glass.

WILLIHNGANZ: Yeah, it's pretty amazing. I did find one little piece that I could feel up in this area here. But . . . but I don't think it needs to be repaired or anything. But the rest of it is just, yeah, it's like glass, it's amazing. Okay . . . of the things that you've created, which – is there one that you're proudest of?

GLENN: *[Glenn laughs]* I kee . . . I keep going back to my table. It was a two-drawer cherry inlaid table that came – the drawings came from a museum, my, my father said he went to this museum in . . . a s . . . I think they had agreed to let him make a line drawing of the piece, which he used as the, as, as his plan. So it looks pretty authentic from wherever this was. I don't really know where it was. I don't have the drawings but . . . at Saint James is that kind of drives me each year to . . .

make things. It's only once a year for three days, and I take found pieces which were something else before I was – I started working on them that might have been a table leg, a piece of a bed, a newel post out of a stairway, or a baluster out of a stairway, and all of these things to me have value if they'll be cleaned up and made into something else other than what they are now, but that's what I do mostly. And then when you work in wood or any raw material, you don't want to throw away the smaller pieces that you have. So I make cutting boards that are smaller. I also take the smaller pieces and make car bodies and, for children and they, all we do is put wheels on them at the fair, but, again, when I throw it away, it's pretty small piece of wood. But that's what I have been doing for the last couple of years. I, I used to make baskets out of veneer, but that is done now by my wife. She's been doing that for about thirty years, because she is juried into the Guild as well as I am and w . . . you have to have your own area of, of whatever you do. But she does the baskets and I do all the other woodworking.

WILLIHNGANZ: Mm-mm, whoa, it's neat. Tell me about your . . . relationship with the Kentucky Guild of Artists and Craftsmen.

GLENN: The first time I can remember the Guild was after most of my graduate work at the University of Kentucky, I was there from August of '69 to August of '70, and in May, I had done my course work and I was working on my thesis, but I didn't have to go to class all the time, a . . . and I had more, actually more time than I knew what to do with, but when I saw this fair advertised in Berea, I went down there and looked around and enjoyed it, because apparently I was getting more and more interested in arts and crafts. And that has to be the first time I knew anything about the Guild. When I came back to Louisville, again I was interested in arts and crafts and I went to the Saint James show which was October of 1970, and the next year I got into the Saint James Fair, which started my thirty-seven consecutive years, but I had an interest in the Guild, but I had trouble getting into the Guild, and I spent my time in, in Louisville in the Louisville Craftsmen Guild and some older people mentored me and told me how the system works, and you'd go to this other show, and another show, and another show, and I did all of that, and we, my, my wife and I were at a show on the, I think we call it the Bel . . . not the Belvedere but the Fourth Street Mall, and the Kentucky Guild people came around and juried both of us into the Guild at that show, because the Guild was – the membership in the Guild was going up and down, and up and down, and at this point it was going down too much, and they just decided to reach out and see if they could find people that could be of that quality. So, when I got in that way I have then been a member and an exhibitor s . . . every, ever since that time, and I think that was in 1982, or, or three if . . . but we . . . one? '81, okay *[Glenn laughs]*. That started the Guild part of me.

WILLIHNGANZ: At that time the . . . the Guild train had already been . . .

GLENN: I never . . .

WILLIHNGANZ: . . . *[unintelligible]* down.

GLENN: Yeah, I ne . . . I never saw the Guild train, I heard about it.

WILLIHNGANZ: Yeah. But they were still doing the annual fairs . . .

GLENN: Right, two . . .

WILLIHNGANZ: . . . in those places.

GLENN: . . . two annual fairs at a place in Berea called the Indian Fort, about three miles out of town. And they had an in . . . a play, or whatever you want to call that, presentation in the Fort, and I have never seen that either, because by the time we joined the Guild, the Fort was, the Indian Fort part of it was abandoned. The facility was there and we still used it. They still have a summer show there, but the Guild, as we know it today, has not been to the Indian Fort for three or four years. We go to a place in downtown Berea now, a park, or the Acton Folk Life Center. And somewhere along my early . . . part of my Guild . . . membership, I decided to work, which the members do, the, the members are the ones that work, but for the most part, and I like to work on the fairs. So, I would go over there a day or so early. And I became in, interested in what was going on. Parts of it, obviously, I like and parts of it I didn't like. So I just became more, and more, and more active, until I decided to run for the board of directors, and I came in fourth, which is . . . puts me out of the picture. You...the first three are the people that get in, and when they called me and told me I came in fourth, I said, "okay." About a week later they called me and s . . . wanted to know if I wanted to, to be on the Board of Directors, and I was confused, because I said, "well last week you called me and told me I didn't make it." And, it just so happened a person resigned for personal reasons, to take care of a family member, and the spot was open, and they decided to ask me, since they just had an election. And I said, "okay." So that got me on the Board of Directors.

WILLIHNGANZ: And when was that, that you recall?

GLENN: I think it was '88.

WILLIHNGANZ: Okay.

GLENN: Because I was then the vice-president in '89, or president in '89 and the president in '90, and the vice-president in '91, which got me then ineligible to be on the Board anymore, because the rules say that you can be on there two terms and you had to lay low, get out. And when you could come back, but that took care of me, and I have been an advisor for several years. But, other than that, I haven't worked for the Guild. One thing is, that the Guild is in Berea, and I am over here, and it's just still hard to go back and forth, and work over there and be over here.

WILLIHNGANZ: Yeah, I was going to say, how were you president of an organization over there when you were here?

GLENN: I'd spend a lot of time, a lot of trips.

WILLIHNGANZ: *[unintelligible]*

GLENN: Somebody told me that, *[Glenn laughs]* that it would cost at least a thousand dollars for a, a person to be the president for a year. And I could not figure that out until a year passed, *[Glenn laughs]* and they were right. You just cannot

believe the, the additional expenses that that incurs. But that's in our by-laws, and that's how we, how we run this thing. It, it, we have a n . . . a director from time to time, but . . . I don't think we have a director now, I, I think that's a, at this particular time, we don't have one. But, whoever is helping us run the Guild, is certainly overworked, and not paid. And, to be honest, I think we are struggling right now, but groups struggle from time to time. That's just the way groups are **[Glenn laughs]**

WILLIHNGANZ: Well, some truth in that, that's for sure! So . . . I assume you've made a lot of friends and acquaintances in the years you've been involved with the Guild.

GLENN: Absolutely! Some of the nicest people that we know . . . are just that way. They are nice people.

WILLIHNGANZ: Mm-mm. And have you . . . gone to the classes that they've held and the workshops that they've done?

GLENN: I would say no.

WILLIHNGANZ: Okay.

GLENN: For some reason I, I don't . . . when offered a chance I ju . . . I just don't see the benefit, so I don't put Forth the effort, either in time or money, or whatever.

WILLIHNGANZ: It seems like most of the . . . the concern with the c . . . the workshops and classes was in basically giving people the business skills to keep themselves afloat while they do their craft, which . . .

GLENN: I would say that's very important, and if I had to comment on that, I'd say that there is not much doubt that most of our members have got the art and craft part of it worked out as good as they ever going to do it, but it's good enough. But there is a lack of their ability to run a business. And, I don't claim that I know how to do that, but I spent fifteen years in marketing with an oil company, so I have some on a, on a job, hands on training for marketing, of how marketing works. So I, I guess I use that in helping me do what I do. But that's an interesting subject. We do have seminars, and sometimes my only complaint is the people that give the seminars are, are . . . expert marketers, but I don't know that they make anything. They've got all these ideas, and some of them are, are from a . . . academia, which is okay too, but the peo . . . **[Glenn laughs]** the people that we know in the, in the craft business are, are not academic people necessarily they just make things with their hands that they are good at producing, so that's, again that's just my opinion. I could probably learn a lot if I went to these marketing things, but . . . I, I would just get bored to death listening to somebody telling me how to market.

WILLIHNGANZ: Mm-mm.

GLENN: The other thing is, people are always telling me how to market, and I need to go here and do this, and I said, "I don't have enough time in my life to make that many things, if I go to all those different places, or if I get on the website and send things all over the country, or all over the world, and I am not interested in taking orders off my computer." I make my own things, keep my inventory and go to the three shows I go to, and that's happy – makes me happy. I have another life, I have

a family and children and grandchildren, and hunting and fishing, and whatever else my wife and I want to do. So . . . I can't just keep cranking things out.

WILLIHNGANZ: I understand.

GLENN: And I don't take orders either at, somebody can't just come up and say, "Well m . . . I, I saw your piece at the last show and I w . . . I'd like to buy it." And I say, "Well it's gone!" And they say, "Well, make me another one just like it!" And I just . . . can't do that.

WILLIHNGANZ: That seems to be . . . to some extent a, an ongoing conflict that crafts people deal with.

GLENN: It's-s-s, well our, our public has been taught that you can just go to a marketing place and see hundreds of many colors, and you can buy as many as you want. And if you come back next week, you can buy as many more as you want. And you can just tell the people there, I want another blue one, or a green one, or a red one, and that's not what the way my craft end of the business works. I usually make one of a kind thing. Sometimes there are multiples, but . . . if you see an artwork, just like this piece here, I would suggest that you buy it, because I don't believe there is going to be another one like **[Glenn laughs]** it, anytime soon, if ever. But . . .

WILLIHNGANZ: I was looking at this and I was thinking, he must have put a lot of design time into getting this, this vision.

GLENN: Sure!

WILLIHNGANZ: And, if I had put that much in, I sure wouldn't make just one **[Willihnganz laughs]**, I'd make fifty.

GLENN: Well but . . . okay, I agree with that. But, and when you make them they are – I would say they almost have to be made one at a time . . .

WILLIHNGANZ: Oh yeah.

GLENN: . . . you can cut the parts out, but again . . .

WILLIHNGANZ: Right.

GLENN: . . . after you made that, I'm not so sure that you would want to make another one. Now I do not know who made that, but I, I would also want to find out if this is a, the person made that, or is he a representative. And if he is a representative from a company over in Taiwan or, or whatever wan, they're cranking them out. But I don't . . . I wouldn't want to believe that. This has to be an original in my opinion, but . . .

WILLIHNGANZ: Yeah, they aren't cranking them out . . . from Taiwan, they're, they are in the United States. But . . . but he does have a partner, and then they have two other guys that they work with, and I think that the four of them were doing these types of things . . .

GLENN: Okay.

WILLIHNGANZ: And they had quite a few different pieces at the show. This was . . . frankly the most expensive of the group. But . . . but it's just very impressive is all this quality, I . . .

GLENN: Well . . .

WILLIHNGANZ: . . . mean it's just a terrific stuff.

GLENN: It, it's, I, I don't . . . like I said, I don't know who this person is, but it, it makes me feel good if there are four of them doing this. They obviously know what they're doing, and it, they have to be motivated or they wouldn't be able to do this. They would do something else, I . . .

WILLIHNGANZ: Yeah **[Glenn laughs]**.

GLENN: . . . believe me. This is not, that's not easy, nor is it quick.

WILLIHNGANZ: Yeah, I can believe that **[Willihnganz and Glenn laugh]** as I look at it. I, I, I do a certain amount of woodwork too and I can show you a piece of my furniture . . .

GLENN: Well . . .

WILLIHNGANZ: . . . but . . . it's nothing on this level, I mean I couldn't begin to do this type of thing; it's just a lot. Tell me a little about – during the years when you were president of the Guild . . . and those were eighty . . .

GLENN: '89 and '90.

WILLIHNGANZ: '89 and '90, what, what sort of changes were going on in the Guild then? What was happening then? What were you doing?

GLENN: Huh **[sighs]** my main . . . concern or something that motivated me was that I heard at different times, over the years at meetings about our educational projects. And that came, I think from the train that we used to have, that I never saw. But, I kept asking the Board members, can anybody here tell me about the last educational project that we had. And there was no answer. And this bothered me, because I was interested in educational projects for children, or educational projects for anybody, and that seems to be in our – part of our mission was that we would help the public understand what we do, and we just used the word education, that they would become educated, somehow, and there're many forms. And this just went on and on, and on, and finally, my wife and I went to a flea market one time and I was either the vice-president at the time, or the, a president, but we . . . we are both interested in quilts and that's where we spend a lot of time at the flea market doing. And on the way home, she asked me about what was keeping me from carrying out a project with the children and what would it be. And I said, "Well the, the first that's keeping me from doing anything about is, I don't have a person that I can delegate this to, that would do the work." Because, when the Guild was trying to do more and do better and do what we should have done, it has to be done by some people, and these people aren't just standing in line waiting to take on a responsibility do the work, carry out the project, because it took time and they just weren't available. So, when I told that to my wife, she said well she would like to do the quilt project. And after a couple of days we were involved in making

the parts and pieces for a quilt project, primarily for children. And they would take pieces of cloth and glue them on to a piece of paper that had the quilt pattern on it and they were from very simple to very complicated patterns in a book, and to make a long story short, that was the first educational project that I know of, that we had at the fair, and we had them at the fair, and the children were lined up just table after table after table, these children, knee high on up doing this project. And, and I say that's the first project that I know about, and it's one of the few ones that we've ever had. Again, if anybody can do this, but it takes time, you have to get the people, cut out the pieces, put the program together, and when you ask us members would you be willing to do that, most people would say, "I don't have the time, I'm by the – I'm by myself, I need to be in my booth," and that just frustrates me, but that's the way, that's the way things are. I have to accept that. But I still, I, I played with the children this last week, we made cars for the boys and pine cone flowers for the little girls, and a pine cone flower is if you take a large pine cone, and slice it like bread, you have a round piece of the pine cone that looks like some kind of flower. I don't know what flower it is, but the children don't either, but it doesn't matter. They walk off with a little stick with a pinecone on the top of it, and as far as they are concerned, they are very happy. And again, that's . . . no big deal, but my point is, I'm trying to expose these children to what I do, and hope maybe as they grow up they'll come back. They'll surely remember it. But, who knows if they'll ever do anything with arts and crafts. But if, if you and I don't pass this on, we'll die with it and it, everything that w . . . **[Glenn laughs]** that we have in this country, as you al . . . already know is more and more is coming from some other country.

WILLIHNGANZ: Absolutely. Yeah, I certainly agree with you. I wonder what your views are in terms of getting arts and crafts into the school system more?

GLENN: Well, I am . . . one of fourteen people . . . la . . . two weeks ago and again my wife went with me, we went to Bloom Elementary School, and had three fifth grade classes. And we exposed them to the veneer wood, and showed them what we do with it, and four years ago we made b . . . baskets at that school. The chi . . . the children made the baskets, about a waste basket size, but I plan to go back to Bloom in the cold weather, I know the art teacher, and I think we're going to work with the three fifth grade students on their schedule, more than just the fifteen or twenty minute program, so that the children can make the baskets and the plan is, I think they're going to auction them off to the people that come to one of their functions later on in the year. I'm not sure exactly how that's going to work, but . . . I, I participate in that program because I just think that some of us should. It's a shame with the seven hundred and so people that, at the Saint James Fair, that only fourteen of us are willing to do this, but I have to remember that a lot of the people at the fair don't live here, they live far away. So I can't expect them to do this, but there should be more than fourteen of us in this area that are willing to put forth the effort.

WILLIHNGANZ: Mm-mm, I certainly agree . . .

GLENN: But . . .

WILLIHNGANZ: . . . with you on that. What do you think most members, what motivates most members who are members of the Guild to take part in it, to be active in it? What do they get out of being in the Guild?

GLENN: We have asked this question over, and over, and over and you get every answer that you ever heard and a few that you've never heard. Money is one, prestige is another, it, it just runs the entire . . . gamut.

WILLIHNGANZ: So there isn't one defining reason . . .

GLENN: I . . .

WILLIHNGANZ: . . . why people join this or . . .

GLENN: I couldn't . . .

WILLIHNGANZ: Right.

GLENN: If I was in court and had to testify under oath, I don't think I could give you the correct answer. I, I just don't know what it is. I've asked myself that many times. I've heard all kind of excuses, all kind of reasons, and I just don't know what the real one is.

WILLIHNGANZ: As you look at the history of craft work in Kentucky . . .

GLENN: Okay.

WILLIHNGANZ: . . . the Guild, of course, was fairly seminal early on, back in the 1962 when they were formed, and they had a lot of, a lot of support at that time. The governor was behind it, and then there was a, a . . . major figures from Berea and . . . the school and, from across the state, really. And they had a lot of energy in the start there. Then as the years went by, some of that support went away to some extent.

GLENN: Right.

WILLIHNGANZ: The train got shut down after X number of years, and . . . the fairs got less attention and they didn't get the support from the state that they had had before. But they continued on, and other arts crafts organizations arose and worked together. As this, as this has happened . . . what would you say is the, the impact of the, of the Guild at this point, given their history? I mean what, what have they really been able to accomplish in the history of crafts in Kentucky?

GLENN: Huh . . . I find that real hard to answer, but at, at one of our board meetings, it was pointed out to us that in the sixties, there were not a lot of places where the Guild members could market their work, and today there seem to be an unlimited number of places where you can market your work, of all kinds, in every direction, and all kind of people wanting to do that for you, and be your agent, or your representative. So it's just hard for me to, to answer that exactly. There is one thought that there are too many arts and crafts now, all over, and part of that might be true. You can get almost anything you want, either in this country, or you can give it to somebody and they can bring it back to you in six months made some place else, it looks just exactly like the one you started out with. Whether that's true or not, I don't know, but I think you have to bear that in mind.

WILLIHNGANZ: Well, it . . .

GLENN: You know forgery would be a . . .

WILLIHNGANZ: Yeah.

GLENN: . . . a proper word, if you wanted to use that. But . . .

WILLIHNGANZ: It's tricky though, because it isn't as simple, as there are manufactured goods and then there are crafts goods . . .

GLENN: Well that . . .

WILLIHNGANZ: . . . there is no strict line there.

GLENN: That's what makes it so hard to argue the case, or to dis . . . do to, to define it or explain it, or, if you're the producer, you have to work within certain limits or rules or abilities, and it, it's difficult. I, I remember one person who . . . tried to help us decide whether we, we were going to u . . . not the g . . . not the Kentucky Guild, but the Louisville Guild, was trying to decide whether we wanted to use the word 'artist' and 'craftsmen' in the name. And so, we got down to an individual, and the person who was describing the definition of an artist and a craftsman decided that this particular person was neither an artist or a craftsman, and it, it just to me, it just blew me out of the water, because I said **[Glenn laughs]**, "How can you make a statement that this person is neither an artist or a craftsman, it, are they one or the other, or half and half, or, or what is an artist, and what is a craftsman?" And, I don't have the answer to that, but it's just been intriguing because how do you, how do you desc . . . describe that and, and if you named a group, what are they? And I just quit when you say a Guild, and a Guild is just supposed to be a bunch of people gather together to, for their own protection, whatever that meant. But that's what, it seems to be historic that a Guild was formed in order to accomplish something, whatever that was at the time.

WILLIHNGANZ: Generally to get more money for what you're doing.

GLENN: Well that would . . .

WILLIHNGANZ: I think that's . . .

GLENN: . . . occasionally money helps. I, **[Glenn and Willihnganz laugh]** I, I, people joke and, and, and you put a sign up and say, "This is not a museum. This junk is for sale!" **[Glenn laughs]** Because, we need more money to make more items, we can't possibly keep everything we make. After you make a couple of hundred, you like to find a way to get money for some of it.

WILLIHNGANZ: But you can see the compromises that go into that, if you look at, for instance, Louisville Pottery, and . . .

GLENN: True.

WILLIHNGANZ: . . . are they a manufacturer, or are they artisans? Well, a little of both, because they do make individual pieces, and they do make mass pieces, and . . . it's a, it's an interesting line you brought . . .

GLENN: Well . . .

WILLIHNGANZ: . . . up there.

GLENN: . . . it's also interesting if you go to Hadley Pottery, or Louisville Stoneware to look at the background of the people that are working there, and they are from all over the world . . . now! I don't know what they were twenty years or Forty years ago, but they are definitely talented . . . learned their skill somewhere, and are working over here now.

WILLIHNGANZ: Mm-mm.

GLENN: And that, that's part of the arts and crafts too, it's changed!

WILLIHNGANZ: Yeah.

GLENN: All of us don't come out of the mountains of Appalachia. I don't **[Glenn laughs]**. I didn't, but again we're, we're not all in log cabins up there anymore. That may be where we started in the eighteen hundreds, or the eighteen-fifties or the nineteen hundreds, but not now.

WILLIHNGANZ: Well, and I think that, that the, the function of, of the work has changed. I mean there was a time when you made a chair because you needed a chair to sit on.

GLENN: Right.

WILLIHNGANZ: And now, you need a chair to sit down; you can buy one from China. They are in every store around . . .

GLENN: You got it!

WILLIHNGANZ: . . . but if you want a piece of artwork, or a chair that looks distinctive or unique, or contributes to the esthetic that you're trying to create, then you look at hiring a furniture maker who can do something that is unique and distinctive.

GLENN: Well, the only problem with that, I, I agree with you a hundred percent, but the only problem with that is, the older people that are furniture makers or anybody else like that, are, are dying and who's going to take over? And they'll have to be the UPS men who you talk to o . . . you know, you talk to somebody on the cell phone and UPS brings your item in ten days! That's sad to me, because we are losing that in this country.

WILLIHNGANZ: Do you think we are in a, a state of decline in terms of craftwork?

GLENN: I don't know, I, I, when I try to answer that question, I think the only thing I can say is people are not willing to work anymore. Life has been too easy . . . for some people. But arts and crafts, to me, is not easy, it's hard work! You have to pay attention; you have to apply yourself.

WILLIHNGANZ: Well, I think you're absolutely right about that, and I, I have concerns just when I go to many of the art shows that we go to, such as the Saint James Art Fair, because you go there and what you encounter are pieces that are done at such a level of competence that I as a personal home builder can't begin to touch **[Willihnganz laughs]** and . . . I look at the very modest . . .

GLENN: You mean the price?

WILLIHNGANZ: . . . furniture – well no, I mean in terms of the skill level . . .

GLENN: Okay.

WILLIHNGANZ: You know, I'm, I find myself somewhat intimidated, then of course these people are world-class people. I mean they are artisans who are, people who have devoted their lives to get in the skills to do this . . .

GLENN: Sure.

WILLIHNGANZ: . . . and you don't pick up marquetry in, in . . . a summer course.

GLENN: Right.

WILLIHNGANZ: You, you perfect those skills over years.

GLENN: Well, I would a s . . . I would be willing to say you're exactly right in the, the level of . . . expertise, or the quality has definitely gone up, really gone up, and you see only the best that you could ever see. It always is exciting to go because you see things you never thought would ever be done! Even in wood, I see things made out of w . . . wood on the lathe that I thought would almost be impossible! I would say you can't do that! But that's, if I go back to Rude Osolnik in Berea, he did things in nineteen . . . thirty, Forty, and fifty, that couldn't be done then, but he did it! He ju . . . he was just determined, and he figured out a way to do it, and he didn't have the right tools that he could go to b . . . to Wal-Mart or some place and buy, so he made his own tools.

WILLIHNGANZ: Yeah.

GLENN: So, that's a . . . part of arts and crafts now. If you don't have what you want, you, you couldn't make your own equipment. You don't just give up, you just keep going. Stephen Powell, for an example, he makes that art glass out of Berea Col . . . Center College, is, is absolutely unbelievable . . .

WILLIHNGANZ: Mm-mm.

GLENN: . . . which he keeps doing [*Glenn laughs*], has a show in town now, I believe in, in, but his pieces are just unb . . . unbelievable in glass! He pushes the envelope.

WILLIHNGANZ: Yeah the glass . . . glass is really coming to its own finally.

GLENN: Right.

WILLIHNGANZ: And . . . I – my wife is associated with U. of L. and they, of course are looking. They not only have a glass shop currently but they are looking if, and it's a big if, if we actually get this huge building built downtown, on putting in a glass shop twenty stories up in the air.

GLENN: Gosh!

WILLIHNGANZ: It's, yeah, it's kind of odd to think of this, but that's exactly what they're talking about doing and it's in the design at this point. They're going to have this vented glass shop in the twenty-stories up, and you can go and watch people do

glass work, which will be phenomenal. But at the same time we see the vogue in glass, there are other parts of the craft field that seem to be falling back, weaving . . . the loss of Churchill Weavers was a sad occurrence to say the least.

GLENN: Very sad.

WILLIHNGANZ: And, and I look at, there are other areas, you know, I think basketry is not enjoying the popularity that it may have once had.

GLENN: That's hard work!

WILLIHNGANZ: It's very, very hard work.

GLENN: And you can get a cheap basket from almost any country in the world today . . .

WILLIHNGANZ: That's right.

GLENN: . . . which hurts the basket makers in this country, if you're, especially if you're trying to make them out of white oak, or any other material that it, it's just, it's sad is the only work I can say!

WILLIHNGANZ: Yeah, yeah they've been enormous changes in terms of the cost of materials for wood workers, wood being . . . non renew or renewable resource but one that is being basically . . .

GLENN: Used up.

WILLIHNGANZ: . . . used up! And I'm wondering if you see that affecting the, the craft work that you see out there.

GLENN: I can't see it. I, I know it must be there. But, I try to tell people that come to me and, and want – they tell me what they want, and then they say, "Well, I want you to use some cheap wood," and I have to stop, because I say, "Why don't we make it out of walnut or cherry or mahogany?" And they said, "Well, that's too expensive." And I said, "Well, the expense of what you want it, the wood is a very minor amount of the cost of this article. You're, you're paying for other things." And it's hard to get the people to understand that, if you're going to get somebody to make something and at two, three, four, five, six hundred dollar-range, you need to put some good wood in it, because the cost of the wood is in, is a very small number. And, and also a . . . any woodworker **[Glenn laughs]** knows where all this old wood is. We, we as human beings apparently keep wood, so we've got wood from our families and it's in garages and basements, and barns and it, it's all over. You just have to look for it, but it's still available, in small quantities until we, again, use it all up, which they are doing in different places.

WILLIHNGANZ: Oh yeah, yeah, yeah, it worries me, I, but I know exactly what you're saying. The first serious piece of furniture that I did . . .

GLENN: It doesn't bother me anymore, I just go right on and **[Third party laughs]** keep going. And if you can think of it, you tell me, otherwise we'll both forget it and keep on going.

WILLIHNGANZ: **[Willihnganz laughs]** I sort of . . . have gotten to the place where . . . you know, I thought . . . boy I'm just getting old and more forgetful as time goes by and . . . then . . . this . . . this whole video thing came up for me, and I have only been doing this about three and half years. And . . . previous to that, we owned some video cams. I'd shot, things with the kids and I...extensive stuff. Actually, some of them actually had scripts, and we'd act on old plays and stuff. But, but I was working for a family that had really fascinating history, and . . . I wrote to the president – this is the years after I had left their company. I was their HR directory – and I wrote to the guy who was the head of the family and I said, "You know, you have a fascinating history, I'd love to tell your story, if you'd like to have your history written, I'd love to do that." And he said, "Oh, I've been thinking about this for years. I have been collecting pictures. But I want you to do a documentary, can you, can you make it into a film?" And so I said, "Sure!" **[Willihnganz laughs]** not knowing exactly what that would entail. I said, "you know, I know sort of how to do this," and for three and a half years I have been doing my apprenticeship and I'm still doing my apprenticeship, and it is very extensive . . . body of knowledge out there. But it's been wonderful for me in a lot of ways, because I didn't realize I had the capability – I'm sixty-one years old, the capability to learn anywhere near as fast as I have been able to, or as many things as I have been able to, and you know, you can go into each, they're different parts of going to doing this. I mean you have to, you have to learn not only video editing, and video shooting, and how do you operate the camera, you have to learn . . . photo shop, and how you retouch photos, and how you can use photos, and then you have to use audio, and you have to learn how the sound gets recorded, and how that gets processed and . . .

GLENN: Whoa!

WILLIHNGANZ: . . . then you have to learn . . . other aspects of this whole process and . . . there is just volumes, and volumes of it out there and they're all changes, it changes every year. You get updates which require new skills and new capabilities and things you can do with it, and so you're constantly learning and it's been really kind of wonderful, because I have a new found faith in myself, **[Willihnganz and Glenn laugh]** and I know I need to learn things, and . . . so . . . so it's, it's been very good. And . . . don't think you're getting old, you're really not, you can . . .

GLENN: No, I'm . . .

WILLIHNGANZ: . . . you can revitalize your brain, you can . . .

GLENN: I'm just . . . trying to age gracefully **[Willihnganz and third party laugh]**.

WILLIHNGANZ: Well they tell you the . . . that . . . physical activity, of course is critical to brain activity, and . . . I've gone back to, and started doing a little more juggling. I can juggle three balls at once, and I have been doing it just because I think it's good for my brain to get that coordination going and to keep, to keep myself focused. And along with learning these things, I think it's, I think it's a really good thing to do, although, as soon as they get this, this test perfected for Alzheimer's, I'm going to be the first person to sign up for it. They're having a predictive test. I want to...I can sign up for that immediately **[Willihnganz laughs]**. But, I have Alzheimer's in the family, so it's always a concern, it's something you think . . .

GLENN: Yeah.

WILLIHNGANZ: . . . about as you get on in years. There . . . there have been other organizations that have arisen that support . . . support the arts and crafts work in Kentucky. What would you say are the major organizations in that area that you're aware of?

GLENN: The Kentucky Art and Craft Foundation is the name I remember. I think that's the name of it now, but I can't remember. I think they changed their name, and then they changed it back. I think it's . . .

THIRD PARTY: Kentucky Museum . . .

GLENN: Okay, Kentucky Museum of . . . whatever.

THIRD PARTY: . . . Crafts.

GLENN: Arts and Crafts. The state of Kentucky has a, a once-a-year program and it's called the Kentucky Crafted. It's a market, like the Guild show in, in Berea, in the spring and the fall. But that's high quality. It's a juried...in my opinion it's not easy to get into. But it should not be, it's, it's, it's really the best of the best, as far as I am concerned. My wife and I are in it, but we don't . . . display anymore, we just volunteer. We, we work up in the information booth, and that's just where we decided to work in the cold weather. It's just four days, but that's a lot of fun. We g. . . again we get to see the people, the people are the prime thing that we like to enjoy, because we've known a lot of them. Other than that I, I can't rem . . . just reach out and tell you that I know where a group is that's the premiere or the best, or the, the, the most well known. There are art groups all over the state, as you know, or all over the country, but . . . that's about all I can think of it right now.

WILLIHNGANZ: The impression I've gotten is that there really hasn't been much competition between groups for what resources there are to support arts and crafts work. It's been much more of a cooperative endeavor than you might think. Would you say that's true?

GLENN: I think so, I . . . the, the one thing that, when you're talking about groups . . . all of them need money, so and there is only a certain amount of money around, and you know that from the, even the national, the – in the arts endowments or the money that goes to arts out of the federal government trickles down to the state. Then the state apportions out some of it. Our Kentucky Guild gets something from the state, but not a lot of money, but there's just still . . . there is more requests or demands for the money than, than there is money available, but it, apparently it's been like that for ever, and it probably will be, like the operas struggles from time to time or Actors theater, or . . . the downtown art group here, the . . . on Market Street, our art center, or the orches . . . – not the orchestra, where the . . .

WILLIHNGANZ: You just, you mean the Kentucky Center for the Arts?

GLENN: Yeah, the Kentucky Center, it...I think they have it, their program all worked out. But I'm not sure. But again we're, we're all trying to do our thing, and pay our bills, and have an audience, and have repeat people coming in, as the old

ones leave, the younger ones show up and take their place, but this is probably always going to be a struggle.

WILLIHNGANZ: Looking at what's going on right now with the Guild . . . a lot of people have commented that they feel like the Guild is sort of in decline . . . that they've been losing membership, they don't have quite the energy that they had before. Would you say that's a correct assessment?

GLENN: That's one way of looking at it. And if you want to be a realistic person, we've just finished last week the fall fair, and apparently we have taken in enough money in the gate to pay for the major part of us having another show in the spring. But I'm not sure of that, that's just, I say that it's apparent, but if you ask me about the long term. I said, well we're going up, at it about half a year at a time...and one of the reasons is, that's . . . if you try to be realistic...that's based on how much money we've got and how we get our money. And it's, it's not realistic to think out three, four, five, six, seven, eight years ahead, unless you just want to plan it on paper, but there is a lot to it. We, we tried a show in the spring, and not enough people decided to do it. So we didn't have it. And that was the first time in years that we haven't had a spring show. So, the next question is, are we going to have one in the spring of '08? And there are people that say yes, and there are people that say no, and there is some in the middle. So, I'll have to talk to you in the spring of '08 to tell you whether or not we're having a spring show. But there is some decline, and again, if, if there's shows all over, and many parts, and many groups, and many items...there is just too much of it . . . if you look at it that way. So, I just chose to go to the, my Saint James Art Show and, and once a year in October. Because, until it gets to be in decline, I, and I get where I can't go there, that's where I am going to go every year, because it's big, and the other part is I enjoy it. If I didn't enjoy this, I wouldn't be able to do it. There is some fun in art, in arts and crafts, believe it or not **[Willihnganz and Glenn laugh]**.

WILLIHNGANZ: Oh I do believe . . .

GLENN: Not just the money, but I'm, I'm talking about just the idea of doing something and going to the show, and seeing the people, and seeing your competition, and appreciating anything beautiful like this, and other things. It just that's what keeps me going.

WILLIHNGANZ: Do you think . . . do you have like a, an idea of where you'd like to see the Guild go? What would you like to have happen with the Guild?

GLENN: I've asked myself that a hundred times or a thousand times, and I can't even answer it. I would just hope they can survive. I hope they keep going. I hope they carry these things on. But I, I see things like the white oak baskets, they are not gone forever. But the people that made them are no, no longer with us, they d . . . it's hard work! I went to one of those . . . seminars one weekend, and made my own white oak basket. I made one, but again it goes back to some of my other ideas about the marquetry or anything else. Since I made one, that completely satisfied me, I have not desire to make another, split white oak basket. We cut the tree down, we split it, we made our parts and pieces, your hands and muscles give out. But again I, I know how to do it one time, and it's not perfect but I just wanted to see how

hard that was, and it's hard! But that bothers me that that's disappearing from the face of the earth.

WILLIHNGANZ: Yeah, yeah it seems like pottery is very big right now, glass is very big.

GLENN: Pottery and glass are big. Jewelry has gone out of sight. There is too much jewelry.

WILLIHNGANZ: Yeah, I think it's . . .

GLENN: That's my opinion, but . . .

WILLIHNGANZ: That's my opinion . . .

GLENN: I mean . . .

WILLIHNGANZ: . . .every time I go through an . . .

GLENN: . . . how many . . .

WILLIHNGANZ: . . . art fair.

GLENN: . . . how many rings and earrings and bracelets and necklaces, and, so but that's the way it works . . .

WILLIHNGANZ: Yeah.

GLENN: . . . and people buy them.

WILLIHNGANZ: Yeah, that's the question of . . .

GLENN: So . . .

WILLIHNGANZ: . . . whether there is a market for it.

GLENN: . . . there is a market.

WILLIHNGANZ: Yeah, there is a market and they sell it. But I look at some of the other more traditional things and I, I am sorry to see them in decline. Is the leather work, would you say, going out?

GLENN: I say it was going out. And that would be one of my observations. At the Kentucky Guild Fair that I went to in . . . the spring of seventy, a third of it, I say with pottery, the o . . . another third was leather, because the people that got into the arts and crafts...leather was easy, because you didn't need much equipment. And pottery was available because a lot of people had a p . . . a pottery wheel, and clay was affordable at the time. And then, they . . . have since upgraded and, and I'm not bad mouthing the potters, but there were a lot of potters. Again, they made coffee mugs and plates and platters and, now that's all changed. They make all kind of exotic things now, porcelain, beautiful items, no, no question about that. But . . . again, how, how many leather bracelets and bill folds, belts do you need? And how many can you, can you have? So, I see that as a decline. But again, a good leather worker...he's work hard! It's not easy . . .

WILLIHNGANZ: Oh yeah.

GLENN: . . . or, or quick, it's handwork. Again, how long does a person want to do handwork? So . . .

WILLIHNGANZ: In the, in the . . . wood field, it seems to me that there are more box makers now and these fairly fancy jewelry cases, and . . .

GLENN: Right.

WILLIHNGANZ: . . . and things with multiple drawers that come out of ever . . .

GLENN: Right.

WILLIHNGANZ: . . . which way an all that sort of stuff.

GLENN: There is a market for that, again handmade, made right . . . I see an interest in Shaker.

[End of recording.]

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