

Kentucky Craft History and Education Association, Inc.

Interview with Richard Bellando

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Interview conducted by Greg Willihnganz

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WILLIHNGANZ: So then the politics of, of the organization and in some ways I'm still trying to figure out what's happened over the years because the sense that I get and you would know this a lot better than I is that it started out with a lot of energy; got this big project going with the train which went on for five, six years?

BELLANDO: Wait a minute let me think. '62, '63, '64, '65, '66—yeah, about five years.

WILLIHNGANZ: About five years, then it also got together the, the craft shows fairs and those started what the second year of the train or?

BELLANDO: No they started the in '67 that's cause that's when I came; I was hired.

WILLIGHNGANZ: Okay so they started in '67. So you have that energy going and then the state apparently withdrew, politics shifted.

BELLANDO: In and I don't know Ned Breathitt was Governor then and, and, and there was a democrat Ward was with the Highway Department, but, but Louis Nunn beat him out. And so Louis Nunn came in and, and you would have to do some math, when I say math you would have to look up when Louis Nunn came in. Louis Nunn came in, that's when the train stopped because he, you know. In fact, Jack Blanton was who (laughter – Bellando) was a democrat was one of the few democrats that Louis Nunn kept, he's also now at the University of Kentucky in finance. He was the one that you know, we thought we, you know, because he was a Berean we thought we had you know (laughter – Bellando) (laughter – Willihnganz) we had an "in." That didn't work. No and everybody called him, but, but see all the supporters you know they were all most of them, most of the folks who helped develop the Guild were democrats, you know, they were education people, you know. And I mean it was, it, it Louis Nunn you know, was the only republican I don't know after you know, Fletcher was the next one (laughter – Bellando) (Willihnganz) that was a lot of years, you know. But, but after Louis Nunn let's see after Louis Nunn who was it? Was it John Y. Brown? No. It was.

WILLIHNGANZ: I thought John Y. came earlier, but I'm, I don't know.

BELLANDO: No, no, no not after Nunn. Anyway, but when Louis Nunn was, when Louis Nunn's first year, that's when the train stopped. And it stopped in, well he was elected in November and it stopped in like January or February.

WILLIHNGANZ: Wow.

BELLANDO: (unintelligible)

WILLIHNGANZ: I was going to say he must have taken office in January if he was elected November; so it just immediately.

BELLANDO: Yeah, yeah and, and you know how that happens you know they look at the budget and they cut, cut, cut, cut, cut, you know.

WILLIHNGANZ: Well, after that the, the identity if you will of the, of the Guild sort of becomes around the, the craft shop and the craft fairs and that's pretty much what it does and at some point the, the classes that you held started to move from simply craft work how-to-do things into marketing and the more supportive things and the focus seems to have changed some.

BELLANDO: Well, I'll tell you that, that happened as, that happened under the Brown administration. When I say the, the, the see everybody's talking, when I say that I'm talking about an area; when I was director, when I, when I was, when I was involved at Churchill Weavers well it wasn't then. I was, I was involved with Churchill Weavers, I left Churchill Weavers and I think it must have been '80 something to take over the, the student craft industry at Berea, it was '82 I don't know. But during the Brown, when the Brown administration came course Phyllis who, you know, I have to admit when I, when she said she was interested in crafts I said to myself oh here comes another one, you know that's interested in crafts and she ain't going to do nothing, you know. But that woman really put the face of Kentucky crafts on the map.

WILLIHNGANZ: Now when you say when she came you mean when she came?

BELLANDO: As, as, as, as first lady.

WILLIHNGANZ: Okay.

BELLANDO: Phyllis George Brown.

WILLIHNGANZ: Right, okay I was getting confused. I thought you were explaining Phyllis Alvic.

BELLANDO: Yeah, yeah, yeah and, and with all her connections I mean, you know and, and Phyllis really didn't have she didn't have the time for the Guild to figure out whether they wanted to how they could help her. When I say that I mean she, Phyllis saw some quilts that she liked and wanted, thought they should be sold or displayed she wanted to do it. But the Guild would say, "Well, no they haven't passed standards committee. They're not members of the Guild." So the Guild was too slow for her. The Guild was encumbered by too much politics, too much, too many rules and regulations which is interesting because here you have a government agency saying I don't want to deal with that bureaucracy (laughter – Willihnganz). And, and, and so and this is my take on it, this is just my take on it and I, I served on, on a couple of committees for

Governor Brown to develop it with the crafts. I was at the Berea College when a lot of this was going on and when she did her promotional pieces like when she did the Bloomingdale Show for Kentucky Crafts and she did the one at I. Magnin in, in, in California, you know. She was a mover. She wanted it done fast, so she got her own staff. She developed her own staff to, to run around and do these things; to get these, you know, to get, to, to get the Kentucky crafts a focus on Kentucky crafts. It was and this kind of happened during the time when Garry Barker was no longer Director of the Guild and another gentleman who was, who came from a museum background became Director of the Guild. And I think his name was Jim or something, but I don't, I don't know. He, she, the Guild didn't, did not satisfy the need that Phyllis had to promote Kentucky crafts. Does that make sense?

WILLIHNGANZ: Uh huh.

BELLANDO: Because again we're encumbered with well you know, this woodworker is not a member of the Guild and first of all he has to be a member for the Guild for us to work with you. I mean Phyllis would call and want a, an exhibit and let's say an exhibit of quilts, well she has her own collection of quilts, but she loved quilts, but a lot of the people she has turned up were never members of the Guild. They were just good quilters that had to not become members. And it was that way in every media. So it could be that way in every media. It wasn't that way in every media, but it could be. You know, so the Guild so she, she went on her own and that's how the Kentucky Department of ...well it's changed a couple of times since, but that's how that segment of, of state involvement. The state really took over what the Guild should be doing. Took it over because the Guild was sluggish in, in helping, in trying to work with her and it became still it's own entity and as the state became more predominant it didn't look or it didn't investigate how it could be part of that program. In other words, you know, it was kind of, "Well we're staying here. We're the, we got the values, we got the important organization. You guys are more interested in selling blah, blah, blah. We're interested in selling, but we're only going to sell the very best." You know, it's avant-garde, not avant-garde, but it's, it's the same thing you see in the American Craft Council today. And it's always been that way. The American Craft Council they, their standards are so high that they don't, they don't want other, they don't want traditional, maybe necessary traditional craftsmen. You know, but you can be a member, but they're, that they're not going to show you because if they're not avant-garde enough, you're not avant-garde enough, you're not the you know, you don't have the standards that we have. It's a, it's, it's a class thing, you know.

WILLIHNGANZ: Now did the Highland Guild have the same sort of conflict?

BELLANDO: No, not at all.

WILLIHNGANZ: Why not?

BELLANDO: Well the Highland Guild didn't have that same conflict because first of all it didn't have Phyllis to deal with (laughter – Bellando) you know, I mean she just was, she's an amazing woman. I mean she got so much done, but the, the Guild, the Southern Highland Guild didn't because number one it was grounded in crafts and crafts alone. People on the board at the Southern Highland Guild are crafts people. People on the Kentucky Guild board, many of them were educators to begin with. On my board, and I wouldn't trade any of them, I mean I wouldn't trade, I mean they were all, they were all great people. Mary Spencer Nay who was a wonderful painter from Louisville, Emily Wilson who was, Clare Eagle who was head of the Murray Art Department, Richard Jackson who was from Murray, Rudy Osolnik from Berea, Lester Pross from Berea, Clifford Amicks from the University of Kentucky; these were all people who, but, but for the most part they had real connection to education. Now they weren't, they didn't, they weren't the people who, who thought that, that they were better than anybody else, but, but it was the folks that came after them for some reason they could not, could not, could not dove tail (laughter – Bellando) to use a woodworking term with the state's program. And you know, I think that that's one of the problems the Guild had. Then the other thing is a real lack of leadership from the Director because there was a lot, a lot happening. After Garry Barker left there was a lot of the directors didn't stay long at all. In fact, for a long time they didn't even have a director. They had the secretary of the Guild and she was just doing the craft fairs. And then so the membership took over the running of the Gallery and people would come down there and say I want my, members would say I want my paintings over here, not over here, so that they took away the power of the Gallery manager. Then they started, they started putting their work in on consignment. And you can't, you know, a consignment is you know 40/60; the Gallery gets forty, you get sixty. Well you know, you can't run a business on forty cents on the dollar.

WILLIHNGANZ: How was it handled before?

BELLANDO: Well we bought, we bought, we had out right bought craft objects. Certain art objects we put on consignment, but art objects don't sell as fast and they take up a certain amount of room and so you can sell those on consignment, but it's tough even at that for a Gallery to make that kind of money just on consignment, you know, and work. It take, give you a good example, one of the first people who came, came to our fair was Charles Hublitz. I was able to get him; he was the, he was the Vice President of George Jensen. He came to the very first fair. And bought a lot of stuff and that's, you know, that's what made a lot of people very happy. He told me, he said, "you know in our business if we can make ten cents on the dollar", he said, "we're, we're really happy." Today if you buy, in those days if you bought it for fifty cents and you owned the Gallery, you, you, you rang it up; you sold it for a dollar because it took you almost fifty cents up to forty cents to run your business. Today most craft galleries or craft shops or even retail shops have to, have to, have to mark, the mark up is like a hundred and ten or a hundred and twenty percent. They buy it

for fifty cents they sell it for a dollar twenty or a dollar thirty instead of, you know, because it's so expensive to operate. So, so that's what happened to the Guild Gallery, it started losing money because and, and, and people were you know, you, it's like you had every family member coming in on Thanksgiving Day trying to tell you how to cook your turkey.

WILLIHNGANZ: Now the Guild Gallery was located where?

BELLANDO: Chevy Chase.

WILLIHNGANZ: Chevy Chase? I never.

BELLANDO: Lexington. It's a very nice old part of Lexington. Very, very, very great, it was a great location; jewelry store on one side, antique store on the other, nice restaurant around the corner where a lot of, a lot of University people used to go. So the Guild, so the Guild and the Guild Gallery remember I said I left, I left it with three years rent and, and it was making money, but after, for some reason the leader, the leadership allowed the membership to take over the operation of the Gallery. When I say that I literally mean that people would come in and argue with the Gallery Director on where to put the prints or their painting are not having the, this you know, why don't you put my work over here, you know, so, you know, it has greater visibility, you know. And so it was that kind of a thing and the, so that's the, I know why that failed. It failed because of lack of leadership and because they allowed the membership to try to run the Gallery and, and put more and more pieces on consignment and you can't run, you can't run an operation, you can't run a retail store on forty percent; forty cents on the dollar you can't be, it won't be successful. There's nothing, you can't put and nothing goes to the bottom line except the expense.

WILLIHNGANZ: You know as you talk about this, one of the questions I have in my mind is at what point did the jury, the jurying process start and how much of an effect did that have on these people's self concept and the way they managed the Guild?

BELLANDO: The jur-, the, the, the jurying started immediately. When the Guild was formed they had a standards committee and the standards committee is probably if you could find it is probably one of the most outstanding standards statements made. It, it's, it's high-, it's, it's philosophically philosophical in one way, but it was, it was done by two artists you know. And the standards committee or not two artists, but a lot of it the verbiages from artists and, and a little bit philosophical for people in Eastern Kentucky, you know, or even in Berea or anywhere else to understand unless you, you know, unless you are involved in the arts. But, so the standards committee, the standards and the, has always, have always been in the Guild and have been the main stay of maintaining quality. The state government had a problem with it in the beginning because they wanted us to lower the standards to bring anybody who made anything in. It

was kind of, if there's a small business and they were making jugs, let's say for you know, and they were cranking them out with jigs you know, they wanted those, but at that point, at that time, those folks wouldn't get, wouldn't be accepted into the Guild, you know. But the Department of Commerce when it was under the Department of Commerce said you know these are, this is a state government you have to allow anybody in it's like, you know, because you go to, you live in Kentucky you're accepted into the University. I mean that was the mind set. Now and Phyllis had, when under the Brown Administration, they had a similar problem. But their taste was, was much better (laughter – Bellando) than the taste under, under Ned Breathitt I mean that standard because again the, they looked at it from a purely economic impact kind of program or a program to impact the economy of Eastern Kentucky. So they didn't really care about the standards; they were glad they were there, but they didn't really care about them. Phyllis looked at it because it was attractive, good art. The fact that the Guild, see the Guild lost connection with a lot of its people out there. I mean to try and get new people in. So you have to go out when you are in that kind of position just like I did, I went out and turned over rocks; tried to find people you know. And that's, that's so and again there was a management kind of lack of management and when the Guild didn't have any Director for a number of years Maggie Rafai who was my secretary and the secretary for Garry Barker and a few other people, she ended up taking care of the fair. She ended up promoting the fair, the, the fair and that was the only thing the Guild did for a number of years. And they used it as a revenue generating, for revenue generating. But you know when we started the fair we thought it would be revenue generating, but that's not why we did it. That's why it just kind of got stale. And, and when, and when someone like Phyllis came along and demanded you know, that she, that we needed to have more people and the Guild didn't know how to work with her, I mean literally didn't know how to work with her and, and a lot of the problem was there wasn't any director at that time too.

WILLIHNGANZ: So what did she wind up doing then?

BELLANDO: Well Phyllis you know, she, after she left that position that she started kind of connected itself with the, in a way because Phyllis had a lot of connections in Louisville with the Kentucky Art and Craft Foundation; which is now the Kentucky the, the, The Museum of Kentucky Art and Craft. Now, what is it?

LILA BELLANDO: Kentucky Museum of Art.

BELLANDO: Kentucky Museum of Art and Craft, so the Kentucky Craft Foundation turned into that, but there was see, so, but, but Phyllis still kept the, but the Foundation kept in connection/contact with the, the Kentucky Department of the Arts Department, they've changed so much. In other words, they kept in contact with the state government's program for the crafts. The state, no the state's Fran Redmon who now runs that program or did run the program, she,

they, she was smart enough to go to the Guild and to other craft organizations to find out how they can, how they were able to control their membership through standards. So this Kentucky Art, the Kentucky Government's Art program or Craft program now has standards and they use those as standards from the Kentucky Guild and other craft organizations. So if you want to go to, to, to their show, the art and craft foun-, I mean the show in Louisville the retail show or the wholesale show, you have to you know, you have to pass certain standards. But see the Guild; the Guild could have done that. The Guild could have done exactly the same thing that state government did. They could have had a retail show in Louisville or Lexington. They could have had a wholesale show. VERSA has a wholesale show for their members, but there wasn't the leadership there to do that and I don't know you know, I mean it's, they, they made the decision, the board of directors made the decision on what to do. And at one time I think, and I just found this out recently that the Guild was so lackadaisical about it's, it's existence that it lost it's, it's articles of the corporation with the state. And its non-profit status and you know.

WILLIHNGANZ: It still has non-profit status doesn't it?

BELLANDO: Well now it's been reinstated.

WILLIHNGANZ: But they just lost the paperwork?

BELLANDO: No they didn't, they didn't.

WILLIHNGANZ: They didn't renew it or whatever?

BELLANDO: They didn't renew it on a yearly basis. So, so there's been, there's really a lack of there's this period of years where there's really a lack of leadership or the leadership is really scattered or not focused. And one thing you'll find about crafts people (laughter – Bellando) is that they're, because they're so independent that it's very difficult that they all, that that's why there's so much turmoil a lot of times in craft organizations. What was it Lila we just talked about how what is it they, they, they've kind of they; they live on for controversy (laughter – Bellando).

LILA BELLANDO: They do. It's, it's kind of like fire going through the forest it's sometimes good for it, you know (laughter – Willihnganz). It, it's because everybody has such an independent nature and, and sometimes they can't be really good team players because of that. I know that I'm not supposed to be in here talking.

WILLIHNGANZ: No you're fine. So essentially you had this period, fairly extended period it sounds like of years of confusion and lack of leadership and at some point somebody or Susan Goldstein comes in and things start to pull together again; was there strong leadership before Susan?

BELLANDO: You know I don't know that. I know that Susan was able to pull things together. She was one of the people who got it re-incorporated and got this grant from the Steele-Reese Foundation to put you know, to kind of infuse some money into the organization and, and do some other stuff, but they wriggled it away. I mean after, you know, I don't know what they did with it, but the revenues, you know, the revenues of that they generated just they're, they're not there. That's why almost, they're broke again.

WILLIHNGANZ: Uh huh.

BELLANDO: And it's all and, and I think that, I don't know how you get I think you have to find a person who has somewhat of a vision and, and as the Director so that they can, they can get people to work with them instead of you know, against them and against each other. And I you know if the, if the Guild hadn't been in such a bad situation and you know, the reason they supported me is that they didn't have anything else (laughter – Bellando) they didn't have anyone else, you know. They, they were going to lose this money and they said probably well let's, you know, he's an English major what can he bring (laughter – Bellando) he doesn't know a damn thing about crafts, but let's bring him on and maybe he can make it happen. But so you know, it was a throw of the dice. But, but the Guild has not had a, and maybe it's because they don't have the money to hire a, a Director. I mean there have been good people on the board and there's been bad people on the board too. I mean there had to be in order for it to get in the situation that it's in now.

LILA BELLANDO: Not bad people.

BELLANDO: Well I mean not bad people, but.

LILA BELLANDO: You need to be careful Rich you're being recorded.

BELLANDO: Edit all that stuff.

LILA BELLANDO: Some leadership has been less illustrious (laughter – Bellando).

WILLIHNGANZ: You are careful.

LILA BELLANDO: The thing that the Guild really needs now in my opinion is a very, very strong educational component. They lost that.

WILLIHNGANZ: Yeah.

BELLANDO: Well they also need somebody to, to if that's important, to get it started.

LILA BELLANDO: You have to have a strong leader, somebody with patience.

BELLANDO: You know, but, but you know I was saying is, you know the Kentucky Guild could have done the same thing that Fran Redmon did you know, with what is that program Kentucky?

LILA BELLANDO: Kentucky Craft Marketing.

BELLANDO: It's the Kentucky Craft Marketing Program which is part of the state; they could have done that. Their vision is different, is skewed somehow, I don't know.

WILLIHNGANZ: I interviewed Fran for this.

BELLANDO: Did you?

WILLIHNGANZ: Yeah and she's got a lot to say I mean there's a lot to say (laughter – Willihnganz) there's so much, there's such a period of time we're talking about. We're talking about fifty years here really and it's a huge period to cover and there's been a lot of ups and downs and turns.

BELLANDO: See Karen Horseman was Phyllis's person out there getting stuff together. And after Karen left, Fran took over because Fran worked under Karen. But Karen Horseman was Phyllis's right hand person on you know, getting this you know.

WILLIHNGANZ: Uh huh.

BELLANDO: For instance let me give you another good example of what I'm talking about. I think when they did a Derby, a Derby Breakfast after Derby at Horse Cave, not Horse Cave, but Cave Hill Phyllis wanted a lot of crafts people around that morning to show all of her friends what you know, Kentucky crafts people. And the first time she did it I think she asked the Guild, no she wanted these people and I think she asked the Guild to help her with them or something and they couldn't get it together; Karen got it together. It wasn't necessarily all Kentucky Guild people. It was just it was people that she wanted to set the table the way that she wanted to set it. She wanted to have the people out there that fit in her mind of what, you know what she liked. And, and, and, and Karen you know, Karen we were invited and there was a few other people and some good, very good people were invited, but there were some people who weren't even members of the Guild who were invited, you know. And, and I mean you know, Walter Cronkite was there; God all kind of people you know. Henry Kissinger, you know, it was a great, great venue for, to show Kentucky craft and you know, a lot of people sold a lot of stuff. But that's the kind of thing that hampered the

Guild and kind of made it, so Phyllis tried to work with them for a while, but then you know, start my own University, you know. You've heard that story haven't you?

WILLIHNGANZ: No (laughter – Bellando).

BELLANDO: True story this man and woman went to, went to it was Yale or Harvard and they wanted to, to have, their son had died and they wanted to have a, a scholarship in his name and they went into the office, the President's office and the President was really, he was, it was, it bothered him that you know, this was something that you always give people who are interested in making scholarships in their son's name; the son had passed away as I had said. And he said, "Well you know if we had everybody here who wanted to put a, to make a scholarship, we just couldn't have that many people. It's just, it's not you know, you know how much it, it costs to do something like that?" And she said, the woman said, "Well you know, how much does it cost to you know, to maybe to build a building?" And he says, "Well this is what it costs to run the University." And she looked at her husband and said, "Well dear maybe we just ought to start our own (laughter - Willihnganz);" Stanford University (laughter – Bellando). It's like, it's a true story Mr. and Mrs. Stanford (laughter – Bellando) (laughter – Willihnganz).

WILLIHNGANZ: How funny.

BELLANDO: So I don't know if I've confused you or not.

WILLIHNGANZ: No, it's, it's helping me clarify. I'm trying to get a handle on.

BELLANDO: Why things are.

WILLIHNGANZ: Yeah, what the history of this organization's really been and where it's going. That's another question. One we haven't talked about is, what's the potential for this organization in the future; does it have a potential?

BELLANDO: That's a good question. It's going to be tough.

WILLIHNGANZ: Well, it, it is and.

BELLANDO: For, for it to have a future because it's, you know, it's maybe its like the American automobile industry, you know you wait so long and you can't, can't play catch up.

WILLIHNGANZ: Yeah.

BELLANDO: I mean where, what could the Guild do unless what Lila was saying had, will be have an important educational component and, but then it's going to have to be funded you know. Other people are doing craft fairs out the ying-yang, now there's a lot of wonderful craft galleries around. The Guild couldn't, couldn't match any of that where they could have built on what they had and had a really good Gallery. So the future may be in education for the Guild. And it's surely, surely not in craft fairs. And it's surely not in developing retail shops because God knows we've got enough, enough of those and, and some of those are suffering or you know struggling. Even you know, even, even the Artisan Center in Berea is struggling for, for dollars. A good example, the Tamarack which is in West Virginia which is a, which had a huge, huge facility that has West Virginia Crafts all over it that they, they West Virginia Legislature was talking about closing it because it's too expensive and they're not making any money and they're not selling the kind of volume in crafts. So that's, it's the, the Guild needs, needs to take a different look, it needs to take a different tact and, and just like you know, everything changes, you know, the Guild has to change. And if, it, it had an opportunity to change with, with Phyllis, when Phyllis was there and it didn't, it didn't pick up on you know, it's how it's role could be different, how you could utilize it could, it could be of service to the state. So all those organizations, all the organizations that are that even the Southern Highland Guild it started to redefine itself. Its shops are, are successful, but there's not the growth it used to have. And their craft fairs are successful, but the numbers are way down as far as attendance is concerned. Not, not way down, but down from what they were years ago.

WILLIHNGANZ: Now you and Lila are both on Susan's committee as I understand.

BELLANDO: Yeah, uh huh.'

WILLIHNGANZ: And you probably are aware of the whole thing that Judy Sizemore is putting together and this whole new proposal to go to the foundation and what not. You know, as much as Susan started this with me and what not, as supportive of the Guild and trying to get the Guild back into gear in something, you know, she really is building rival structure at this point.

BELLANDO: The Rival structure.

WILLIHNGANZ: I mean, yeah.

BELLANDO: Yeah, yeah.

WILLIHNGANZ: Yeah I mean that's just what's happening.

BELLANDO: You know and again there is a good example how the Guild has not, has, has rejected her and her ideas because they can't see, they don't

have the vision to see what she is seeing. Course she had the vision, her vision was just to identify into the history and identify certain people within the, the length of the history, but this when we, we all got together we started seeing how important you know, this you know, identifying not just Kentucky Guild Crafts people But all crafts people in the state regardless. You know, all, all hand work has dignity and maybe it ain't the, of the greatest quality, but there is such a thing as the creative process. And you know, little children might not get on to sell at the Kentucky Guild Fair, but there's a creative process going on there and there's an energy that's really important to the culture of, of the state and you know, to the nation for, for crafts and for artistic expression for the nation. It's, it's, it, it's important from that point and it's becoming, it will become more important as we get and probably other people have said this before, high tech you know high touch, you know low touch. The more technical we get the more electronic we get, the more that we have to have those things that are made by human beings around us to maintain our humanity. We don't, you know, it's like people don't, people will stay home and they won't go out and shop anymore because they will shop the internet. You know, and so we've always felt that. There's something special about having, having your coffee out of a mug that's made by another person than it is punched out by some machine. It's like.

WILLIHNGANZ: In China.

BELLANDO: Yeah in China. It's like one time I was at a, during a workshop on Churchill Weavers a training program in, in Miami and I'd read this letter to these people who were you know, sales people on the floor about how this lady wrote us a letter and said, "You know my baby had colic and she was crying and crying," and she says, "I, I was seemed to be constant; seemed to be constant." And she said, "I couldn't quiet her down and I took her to the doctor's he said, she said, then one day just by accident I took a, a one of your blankets out that somebody had given me as a gift, it was still wrapped up and put it in her hand and she grabbed it and stopped crying." And I said to these people, "Is it Churchill Weavers blanket magic? No." But I said, "But it's made, it's worked by mothers, it's made by mothers, it's inspected and folded by mothers who care about children." And I said, "So it's, it's important that we, I that we have those things around us that people make, that people touch; create with their hands. Because I think it reminds us of our humanity. And it reminds us that there's something better than a machine made object." Now you know automobiles, course we've got to have automobiles that are made by machines, but those things that we, that we can have around us, that we can wrap ourselves in, that we can use, that we can adorn our bodies with, those things that are made by hand are and by other people I, I do think in, important spiritually to, to a healthy society or culture.

WILLIHNGANZ: Well I sure agree with you on that. Are you aware of the Dinner Works program?

BELLANDO: No.

WILLIHNGANZ: LVAA does.

BELLANDO: No.

WILLIHNGANZ: Boy you'd love it. It's right up your alley (laughter – Willihnganz). I, I did two television ads for the Louisville Visual Art Association and they'd been doing a program; they'd been doing it for twenty-one years. They do a program called Dinner Works. Kay Grubola was behind us and Kay is a wonderful lady. She's married to Jim Grubola who is head of the Art Department at U of L and Kay is the curator at LVAA and she started this program twenty-one years ago. They get fifteen local artists who design flatware, who design plates and bowls and cups and see. And they each get a design for their table. Then they have fifteen table design teams who come out and design the table and various decorative touches to make, to compliment the dishware. They have fifteen different set ups tables of eight in their galleries, two galleries; they fill them up with these. And they, they're on display for about, about six weeks or so. They have, last year they had almost five thousand people come through.

BELLANDO: Whoa!

WILLIHNGANZ: Because they have the, there's a ceramic convention in town which was perfect timing. So they're trying to get back to that, that attendance by having me do some TV ads for them. So I did some ads for them and then we went to their Gala. They serve a dinner and you can buy a table and my wife was in a position to buy a table, she can afford to for U of L and then we bring in various supporters for U of L and then we all sit down and eat a fabulous meal there. And it's just wonderful to see that the whole "tablescapes" they call them, that these people create because they're so unique. I mean they have some very modern designs and some very traditional designs and some very odd artistic not even functional, but they're beautiful to look at (laughter – Bellando). And then these tables and chairs and they're so different. Everyone, the had one last year that was modeled on an outdoor Italian Café and they had a little vessel parked in the middle just to liven it up (laughter – Willihnganz). And they've got an awning coming down and fence railing and stuff and you know, they just set up a little area about the size of this rug with a table for eight.

BELLANDO: Now is that, and that's done through the University of Louisville?

WILLIHNGANZ: No, this is, this is an independent agency The Louisville Visual Art Association right there at the water tower on the river.

BELLANDO: Oh yeah, okay sure.

WILLIHNGANZ: And, and it's a, it's a great organization. They do some terrific stuff and this is one of their programs, but you're eating off something that somebody designed just and you can buy this stuff there, but I think it's mostly to be on display. And it's just fascinating to look at the different designs that people come up with a different things.

BELLANDO: That's really a neat idea.

WILLIHNGANZ: Yeah it's wonderful, it is, it is truly wonderful and it's on display right now through March sixth or eighth I think it is. So it's worth seeing. Well I've probably taken up enough of your time and maybe you can have dinner on your way (laughter – Willihnganz) if you're lucky.

BELLANDO: I don't know about that.

WILLIHNGANZ: And I probably should head home. I really appreciate your time and all of your insight.

BELLANDO: I, I just don't know how much of that you can use.

WILLIHNGANZ: Boy I don't know either, but we'll see.