

JOHN A. MICHAEL IS AWARDED JUNE KING MCFEE
AWARD IN WASHINGTON, D.C.

The following is John A. Michael's acceptance speech on the occasion of his receiving the June King McFee Award in April, 1989. In the note he enclosed with the copy of this speech, he expressed concern that it is rather personal and hoped that it would meet with our approval. For those of us who were able to hear and see him deliver this speech, this transcription is a sweet reminder of the laughter and tears we were witness to and shared. For those gentle readers who were not able to attend this ceremony we believe that they will agree (upon reading the following) that Dr. Michael is both a humorous and numinous human being in all that he shares with those he encounters throughout his life. (Must be the white hair!) We thank him for being so generously personal.

Kathy Connors, REPORT Editor.

It is an honor to be recommended for this award by Louis Koenig, a former President of the Ohio Art Education Association, a former president of the Ohio Education Association with 88,000 members, a former Chair and currently Board Member of the State Teachers

Retirement System in Ohio -- and just stepping down as Director of Continuing Education of his school district. I want to thank Lou and those asked to write reference letters for me: Drs. W. Detmers, M De Jong, R. Freyberger, C. Dorn, G. Plummer, R. Raunft, and S. Packard. And, I also want to thank the Caucus Selection Committee for choosing me. (I'll send you all a check later. That's a joke. On a pension, everything concerning money is a joke.)

To me, this is like getting an Academy Award, an Oscar . . . and I want to thank my wife, my children, my mother, my agent, President Gregory, President Qualley, President Bush, God, and . . . I really feel good tonight!

Frances anderson received this award last year. What a coincidence that I should receive it this year! On our way home from Florida last month (you can spend a couple winter months in Florida when you're retired); we stopped at Florida State University where Frances and I took over Dr. Troeger's class when Dr. Troeger was at the funeral of Mary Lou Kuhn's mother. I was at Florida State to give a lecture for Chuck Dorn -- who wasn't in his class either because his wife was in the hospital for an emergency. Jessie Lavano-Kerr (1983 recipient of this award) came to introduce me to the class. (Anyone need a substitute?) Well, I really do feel honored to follow Frances and Jessie in receiving this June King McFee Award.

I have been aware of the work of June King McFee since her first book came out many years ago. Remember Preparations for Art? She is a great person in our field and it seems so appropriate to have this award given her name. Many of my former students have gone on to do graduate work with her.

Dr. Hagaman sent me a letter telling me of the award but she sent it to the University. Since I am retired, I seldom get back to the office so I didn't receive it until a few days before coming here. I didn't know I was to give a talk until I got the letter. Lou had only told me that I was to receive the award. He didn't know about the talk either. However, I had an inkling when I received a card from Ruth Freyberger saying she was going to come listen to my talk! Since I was giving two talks in sessions before this, I wasn't quite sure just which one she was referring to. So this is kind of off the top of my head but I did write out a few notes.

I need to use notes when I talk ever since teaching at the University. When I taught junior high, I could only talk for about four or five minutes at the beginning of each class because the kids got restless and told me to shut up so they could do their art work. (Apparently I was very successful at motivation and considered it a compliment.) I trained myself to say everything important to a class in about five minutes. Then, when I went to teach at the University, I was given lecture classes when I was supposed to talk for an hour. I thought, "Oh, my God, how can I ever talk that long?" So, I made notes. Now, I have notes for every occasion. I guess you could call them generic notes. My dinner conversation notes: "Pass the butter, salt, and pepper." "Pass the main dish." I really have a blank there so I can insert steak, fish, ham, etc. Then they're the notes for people who drop by unexpectedly: "Did you have engine trouble?" "A flat tire?" "How's the weather out there?" "That's a nice _____ you are wearing."

From my experience, life really begins at 60. Since reaching 60, with this, I have received several national awards and recognitions. Nobody ever noticed me before -- when I was in the 50's and 40's or 30's (except for Betty, my wife). I guess it's this white hair. But look what you have to look forward to. I hope you all get white hair too!

By the way -- these are my generic award notes. Just thought you would like to know ...but I have up-dated them a little.

It is a great honor for me to receive this award from the Women's Caucus because I assume there is a kind of natural bias here --- to pick women. One would expect that to be the way it is. But being a Research Coordinator of the Caucus and working with Sandy Packard when she was your Chair (1976-78), I feel pretty close to the Caucus and have fond memories. Sandy talked me into doing a survey of leadership roles in art education to find out where women were in the important positions in our field. It was the equivalent of any doctoral study I ever saw that she asked of me -- a tremendous undertaking. But I wanted to be supportive of Sandy in what she was doing, so I did it. . . So, what did I find? Almost twice as many women (63%) were in large city supervisory positions (where the money is!) than men (36%). And almost twice as many men

were in all the other positions (the church-work positions) except the Presidents of state associations where men and women were about equal. The findings that really surprised me were those that indicated the newness of our field: 80% of all state art supervisor positions were instituted since 1950, 55% of all state art education associations were founded since 1950, 59% of all state certification programs at colleges/universities were started since 1950. How young we are! Even with white hair!

But only 34% of the large city art supervisor positions were begun after 1950. This explains why art supervisors played such a prominent role in the early days of our field -- before 1950. If you are really interested in this study, it appeared in Studies, Vol. 18, No. 2, 1977. At the time, I thought it was an earthshaking revelation but it has only been referred to once that I have seen.

Now, some vignettes (a French word, maybe a romantic French word). No, it doesn't mean I'm going to serve you wine! It means a brief word picture -- in case you wondered. It also means a photo or drawing that fades out to white at the edges. I'd like to fade into a few things I remember -- proud professional moments.

First, my fourth grade teacher, Miss Bennett, introduced me to art. She was an elementary teacher who had an art education class and must have liked it because we did a lot of art in her class. There was no art teacher in our school in 1929. Out in the country where I grew up we were lucky to have schools. We didn't have a high school until 1919. Now, back home, they have many certified art teachers, grades K-12. . . In junior high, my parents saw me trying to draw and gave me lessons from a private teacher. She was the artist of our little community -- Edith Weissinger -- and mostly copied pictures. That's a vignette of me before high school. Do you get the picture?

Then, with no art in high school, I majored in math and science. Upon graduation, I visited Ohio State with my high school principal who was also my science teacher-- Mr. V. D. Campbell. He took me to a chemistry lab. It was so long you couldn't see the end of the tables. I was used to a small school-- only 23 in my graduating class. So, I said, "Take me to the art building." It was old Hayes Hall and was small, intimate, and

everyone was friendly. (You know how we are!) Well, right then and there, I decided to go into art. In my world at the time, there were only two things to do: be a farmer or a teacher. I hated cows and loved school. I've been in art ever since and never regreted a minute of it. So that is how I got here. That's another picture! So...creative, spur of the moment decisions are often the right ones in life as they are in painting. And, those few early art experiences must have had a lasting effect upon me. Even a few art experiences can make a difference!

Most of my wonderful remembrances--vignettes (I love to say that word) -- involve my students and other friends I have made in the field. I'd like to share a few of these with you. I always asked my students why they wanted to teach. When they weren't sure, I asked them if a building were on fire and you could save either a famous painting like the Mona Lisa or a child, which would it be? If they chose the child -- then they probably should become teachers. That's why we're all here. We are saving children by developing their abilities. Well, here are some of the students I remember.

Barbara Reichert was in the 5th grade in my art class in 1942, my first year of teaching--before all of you were born! We have exchanged Christmas cards every year since then -- 47 years. She is now married, has three children who have graduated from college. One is an art teacher. I remember Barbara as having a wonderful sense of color and I still have one of her drawings. Like Barbara, my students have become my friends... some of very long standing. Aren't we fortunate to be teachers!

Harold Kay was another student I had when I started teaching in 1942. Howard was in the 6th grade and I also taught him in the 7th and 8th grades in Fairview Elementary School. Howard was very talented in all the arts and concentrated on music in high school and college -- taking no art courses -- becoming a school principal in the same district where Lou taught. The only instruction Howard ever had was with me in the 6, 7, and 8th grades. Howard continued painting in his leisure and when the Board of the State Teachers Retirement System bought art work for their building, they purchased many of Howard's paintings. Now, Howard has retired and is continuing to paint and exhibit his work -- all based upon three

years of instruction with me and his own experimentation. Art teachers can make a difference at the elementary/middle school level!

Jim Houp was a freshman about 1952. I was then teaching in high school. Jim told me that his eighth grade teachers tried to persuade him not to attend high school because he did not have the ability to do high school work. However, I could see that he was talented in art and was a hard worker. Well, I kind of took him under my wing and he did some marvelous work -- painting a very large mural for the Student Council Room and creating all the art work for our school band and football games. I got him a summer scholarship to study lettering and sign painting between his Sophomore and Junior years. He did remarkably well and began to letter signs on trucks and on everything else. By his Senior year, he had developed quite a business and, I'm sure, was making more money than I as a teacher. Jim graduated and went into the Navy. He continued to letter and paint there, attracting the attention of his captain. He ended up doing all the signs and art work for three ships and was let out of the service early so that he could attend a commercial art school in Cincinnati. He finished a three-year program in two years, graduating with honors. This boy, whose teachers thought he should not go on to high school, now has his own art business and is very successful. Art teachers can make a difference at the high school level!

Bill Detmers was a student teacher in our Saturday Art Program at Miami. By this time I was teaching at the University level. Apparently, Bill was having a problem, and one Friday morning came to me and said he didn't want to teach his Saturday class. In fact, he wanted to drop art education altogether. We had quite a talk but I would not let Bill out of his responsibility of teaching on Saturday. I believed in him. Well, he taught on Saturday and I assisted him in getting help to work out his problem. Bill received certification and graduated, then went on to Cranbrook for an MFA where he was given a scholarship in printmaking. Bill then taught in public school, got a Doctorate in Art Education and has taught in universities at Louisiana, Colorado, Hawaii, and is now Associate Professor at Culver-Stockton College and director of Mabee Foundation Gallery in Canton, Missouri.

Art teachers can make a difference at the College undergrad level!

Ruth West was a graduate student in our summer Masters Program and was telling me about an up-coming opportunity -- the State Supervisor of Art position in Kentucky. However, Ruth had little supervisory or administrative experience at the time and seemed to lack confidence. I recognized her great abilities in these areas and encouraged her to try. She was enrolled in my Supervision Class and, of course, we talked a great deal about this area. I finally convinced Ruth that she should try. A principal in our area had a reputation as one who hated art and art teachers. There was a position open, though, in one of his schools. Ruth thought that if she could be offered this art teaching position, she may have the necessary abilities to work with all administrators. Well, to make a long story short, Ruth made an appointment and at the end of the interview, the principal was so impressed he offered Ruth the art teaching position. When she said she couldn't accept it at the salary he offered, he talked the superintendent into making her a supervisor and paying her an administrator's salary! Well, that convinced Ruth, so she applied and was made the State Supervisor of Art for Kentucky, a position which she held for many years -- doing a fabulous job. Art teachers can make a difference, even at the graduate level!

I would like to mention just a few more of my student/friends who have brought joy to my life -- whose lives have touched mine. Maryl Fletcher De Jong is very active in INSEA; you see her column in each issue of the NAEA News. Maryl was one of my undergrads a few years ago, who went on to get a doctorate and now teaches at Clermont College, a branch of the University of Cincinnati. In 1988, she was voted Ohio's Outstanding Art Educator of the Year and has received international recognition also.

Craig Roland was one of our graduate students after serving as one of our cooperating teachers in Monterrey, Mexico. He also went on to get his doctorate and allowed me to use photos of his secondary students in my book, Art and Adolescence. Craig has taught very successfully at the university level, now being on the faculty of the University of Florida.

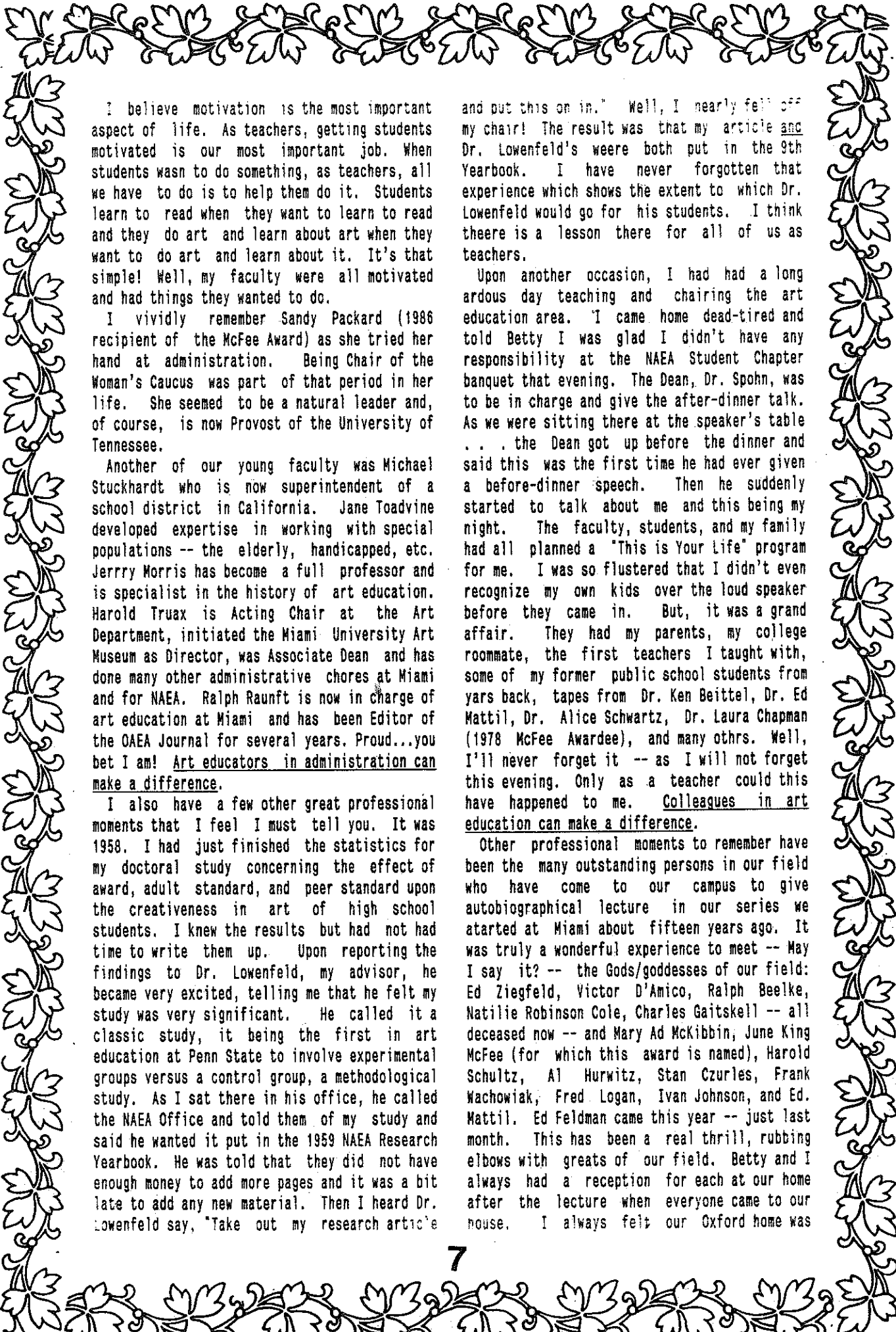
Pat Finn was another of our cooperating teachers in the American Elementary School in

Berlin, Germany. She received her Masters from Miami and comes back to visit us every year -- from Germany. In fact, she spent four days with us at Christmas time.

Gail Lutsch came to Miami one summer session for a drawing class. The Chair of the Art Department, Mr. Butler, was so impressed with her work that he asked her to come talk with me about doing graduate work since she had taught in public school for five years. After a year of correspondence, she finally came as a Graduate Assistant in art education. During the first semester of graduate work, I always had a conference with each student when we talked about his/her goals and work. Well, I discovered that Gail's primary goal was to teach studio (drawing and painting) in college. I said, "Oh, my! You're getting the wrong degree. You need an MFA." Strange how so many graduate students don't know one degree from another. Gail was so far along in her studies, I suggested she finish with an MA in Art Education, taking some courses that would also apply to the MFA. Then, she was accepted in the MFA Program, graduated, got a position teaching both art education and studio at Bethel College in Kansas and just received tenure and promotion to Associate Professor. She is now on sabbatical to paint for a year. Last summer she was married and she and her husband, Dr. Wayne Wiens, came and visited us for a week as part of their wedding trip.

I have many other stories of my students, but you don't want to be here all night. There was Helen Muth, Judy Bell, Dr. Pam Gill Franklin, Martha Bethune, Marianne Jackson, Pat Bruns, Jean Truitt Ervasti, and Dr. Dean Howell -- all present at this conference. These are wonderful memories that are only possible for us as teachers. I'm sure you all have similar wonderful experiences involving your students and hope that my experiences remind me of yours.

As the person in charge of art education at our University, I again saw myself as a teacher/leader on a somewhat different level than in the classroom. I saw my job, as Chair, to be one of encouraging and staying out of the way, even protecting my faculty from university rigamarole, so as to let them -- to help them -- do what they were capable of doing and wanted to do professionally. They were all highly motivated, very professional, and possessed great ability.



I believe motivation is the most important aspect of life. As teachers, getting students motivated is our most important job. When students want to do something, as teachers, all we have to do is to help them do it. Students learn to read when they want to learn to read and they do art and learn about art when they want to do art and learn about it. It's that simple! Well, my faculty were all motivated and had things they wanted to do.

I vividly remember Sandy Packard (1986 recipient of the McFee Award) as she tried her hand at administration. Being Chair of the Woman's Caucus was part of that period in her life. She seemed to be a natural leader and, of course, is now Provost of the University of Tennessee.

Another of our young faculty was Michael Stuckhardt who is now superintendent of a school district in California. Jane Toadvine developed expertise in working with special populations -- the elderly, handicapped, etc. Jerry Morris has become a full professor and is specialist in the history of art education. Harold Truax is Acting Chair at the Art Department, initiated the Miami University Art Museum as Director, was Associate Dean and has done many other administrative chores at Miami and for NAEA. Ralph Raunft is now in charge of art education at Miami and has been Editor of the OAEA Journal for several years. Proud...you bet I am! Art educators in administration can make a difference.

I also have a few other great professional moments that I feel I must tell you. It was 1958. I had just finished the statistics for my doctoral study concerning the effect of award, adult standard, and peer standard upon the creativeness in art of high school students. I knew the results but had not had time to write them up. Upon reporting the findings to Dr. Lowenfeld, my advisor, he became very excited, telling me that he felt my study was very significant. He called it a classic study, it being the first in art education at Penn State to involve experimental groups versus a control group, a methodological study. As I sat there in his office, he called the NAEA Office and told them of my study and said he wanted it put in the 1959 NAEA Research Yearbook. He was told that they did not have enough money to add more pages and it was a bit late to add any new material. Then I heard Dr. Lowenfeld say, "Take out my research article

and put this on in." Well, I nearly fell off my chair! The result was that my article and Dr. Lowenfeld's were both put in the 9th Yearbook. I have never forgotten that experience which shows the extent to which Dr. Lowenfeld would go for his students. I think there is a lesson there for all of us as teachers.

Upon another occasion, I had had a long arduous day teaching and chairing the art education area. I came home dead-tired and told Betty I was glad I didn't have any responsibility at the NAEA Student Chapter banquet that evening. The Dean, Dr. Spohn, was to be in charge and give the after-dinner talk. As we were sitting there at the speaker's table . . . the Dean got up before the dinner and said this was the first time he had ever given a before-dinner speech. Then he suddenly started to talk about me and this being my night. The faculty, students, and my family had all planned a "This is Your Life" program for me. I was so flustered that I didn't even recognize my own kids over the loud speaker before they came in. But, it was a grand affair. They had my parents, my college roommate, the first teachers I taught with, some of my former public school students from years back, tapes from Dr. Ken Beittel, Dr. Ed Mattil, Dr. Alice Schwartz, Dr. Laura Chapman (1978 McFee Awardee), and many others. Well, I'll never forget it -- as I will not forget this evening. Only as a teacher could this have happened to me. Colleagues in art education can make a difference.

Other professional moments to remember have been the many outstanding persons in our field who have come to our campus to give autobiographical lecture in our series we started at Miami about fifteen years ago. It was truly a wonderful experience to meet -- May I say it? -- the Gods/goddesses of our field: Ed Ziegfeld, Victor D'Amico, Ralph Beelke, Natilie Robinson Cole, Charles Gaitskell -- all deceased now -- and Mary Ad McKibbin, June King McFee (for which this award is named), Harold Schultz, Al Hurwitz, Stan Czurlis, Frank Wachowiak, Fred Logan, Ivan Johnson, and Ed. Mattil. Ed Feldman came this year -- just last month. This has been a real thrill, rubbing elbows with greats of our field. Betty and I always had a reception for each at our home after the lecture when everyone came to our house. I always felt our Oxford home was

historic because of all the great art educators having been there. You know, it's like George Washington slept here! Outstanding people in our field can make a difference.

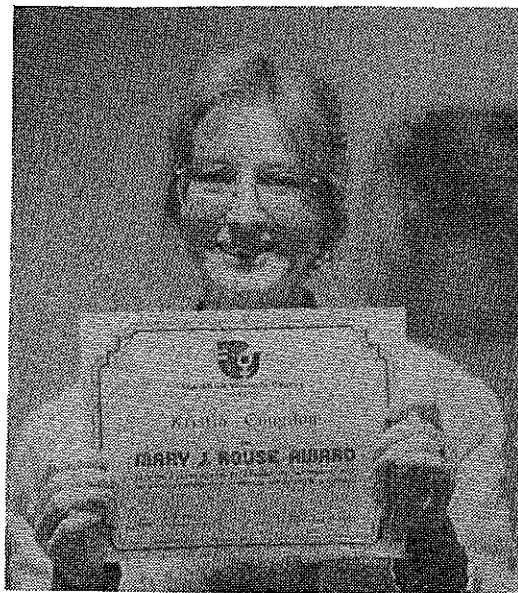
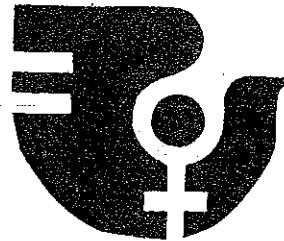
Another happy time just happened. It was a letter I received right before this conference, a letter from Pearl Greenberg saying that she was using my text in her secondary art class at Kean College of New Jersey and her students were most favorably impressed and wanted to meet me. How exciting! I really loved to teach and now I'm teaching via my books. Professional writing can make a difference.

Although I have many, many more great professional moments in my life, I would like to mention just one more. In 1985, I was asked by Delegates Assembly to organize and develop the retired art educators as an NAEA affiliate group. I'm proud to say that we now have 42 states with RAEA Representatives who are organizing the retirees of their respective states. We had five sessions and a business meeting here at this Washington, D.C. NAEA Conference -- our third conference in which we have participated. As a result of this endeavor, I have made many wonderful friends: Ruth Freyberger (another June King McFee awardee in 1980), Ida Nell Williams of Texas who has been with me as our program Chair, Frances Kyllonen of Missouri who did a tremendous survey concerning age and retirement in the various states, Ruth Beatty of Michigan who is our new Chair -- and I could go on -- Liz Smith of South Carolina, Dorothy Chilcutt and Margaret Earwood of Florida, Pasquale Morano of Massachusetts, Carolyn Howlett of Illinois, Bob Foley of New Mexico, Jerry Poole of Arkansas, Jeanne Weitz of Texas, and Janet Fox also of Texas, and on and on. Now, all who retire can look forward to continued professional affiliation and involvement in the Retired Art Educators Affiliate of NAEA. Professional organizations can make a difference.

I am very appreciative of this award and feel greatly honored. I would like to accept it with my wife, Betty, who has been most supportive in everything I have done -- even attending these NAEA Conferences.

My Cup Runneth Over! Thank you.

Dr. John A. Michael



Editor's note: We have been privileged to be able to print Dr. Michael's Acceptance Speech in its entirety (with only a few small deletions). We also wish to print Dr. Kristin Congdon's entire acceptance speech for the Rouse Award. However, space in this issue does not allow, so look for it in our winter issue. We hope that our readers and Dr. Congdon don't mind the wait. It is a speech worth the wait.