



3310 Piedmont Road  
Charleston, WV 25306  
304.926.3770  
[www.tamarackfoundation.org](http://www.tamarackfoundation.org)

## **Tamarack Artisan Foundation Fellowship Awards Support Education, Preservation, Restoration Efforts**

CHARLESTON, W.Va. — September 16, 2014 —Artisans from central West Virginia have won fellowships from the Tamarack Artisan Foundation to help support their ongoing efforts to preserve and enrich West Virginia's cultural heritage.

The artisans, who were honored with the foundation's highest recognition, include music and folklore preservationist Michael Kline of Elkins; award-winning wood sculptor Norm Sartorius of Parkersburg; wheel-thrown pottery maker Brian VanNostrand of Hacker Valley; and nationally recognized porcelain and ceramics maker Kate Harward of Belington.

"Each of these artisans has made noteworthy and lasting contributions to West Virginia's cultural heritage, whether it is through their creative works or their preservation of the stories of people and events in the life of our state," said Sally Barton, executive director of the Tamarack Artisan Foundation. "They represent the true spirit and quality of a West Virginia artisan."

The fellowships will be celebrated at Tamarack in Beckley on November 7 at a fundraising reception to introduce the new CEO of Tamarack following the Foundation's annual meeting.

Tamarack Artisan Foundation grants to artisans, including the fellowship awards, are made possible by private donations to the foundation.

### **Kate Harward: Incorporating Functional Pottery in a Functional Life**

Kate Harward is, perhaps, the epitome of a multi-tasker, with her gas-fired kiln and pottery studio just steps from her home and garden. A self-described "functional potter," the Belington-area resident has been working her artistic will on ceramics for 38 years. Much of her work, which includes wheel-thrown and hand-formed pottery, is sold wholesale to galleries and museum shops across the country.

"The studio is very integrated into the life of the house," Harward wrote in her statement to the selection review panel. "Right now, I am canning tomatoes and firing the kiln while I complete this application."

Harward, who also has used her clay-forming skills to teach school-aged children about pottery, said she has two goals for the fellowship award: to fund the completion of a "soda kiln" that already is under way and to further her education and understanding of clay in others societies by studying potteries in Morocco. Harward previously has visited China and Japan to study pottery in those cultures.

## **Michael Kline: Voices and Reflections as Spoken Art**

Michael Kline has a lifetime invested in his audio and radio creations featuring literally thousands of recorded voices. The 74-year-old folklorist, musician and audio producer, has been "driven to record and preserve spoken voices" of people who were eye-witnesses to events or who could tell stories and remembrances of those from earlier generations.

"I have combined a number of creative roles in my pursuit and teaching of arts for social change," Kline said in his application for the fellowship award. "In West Virginia, how people put words together becomes just as important as what they say. ...I grew up with a strong, innate sense of harmonics and love of hearing people talk about themselves. As a child, I could sit and listen by the hour to the ramblings of older neighbors, whose memories stood in stark contrast to the children's classics my parents read aloud to us boys during our growing years, which I also loved."

After studying anthropology, ethnomusicology and Appalachian folklore in college, Kline devoted himself to recording, preserving, and publishing the lives and events of West Virginians. In 2011, he was honored with The Footbridge Award "for outstanding efforts in preserving Appalachian music" by FOOTMAD, a statewide folk music and dance organization. He also won the 2013 Oral History Association's Emerging Crisis Award for his documentation of the natural gas rush in western West Virginia.

Several regional university libraries have expressed interest in archiving Kline's recordings, many of which date back as far as the 1970s. Kline said the Tamarack Artisan Foundation fellowship award will help fund the transition of these recordings to archival status and broaden their access to the public.

## **Norm Sartorius: Spoons that are Sculptures that are Spoons**

When you watch Norm Sartorius work, there is a sudden transformation in which he and his wooden works almost seem to become one, and what emerges is a graceful melody of curves and wood grain in sinuous forms that, he readily admits, are not for function. Indeed, he likens his wooden spoons to a fine piece of jewelry in which its natural beauty has been exposed for admiration and adornment.

"I have felt compelled to make spoons since I started woodworking," Sartorius said. "To me, 'spoon' is just another category, similar to bowl, plate, or teapot. ...The character of the raw pieces of wood and my sensibility at the time I am working contribute greatly to my designs. Inspiration, for me, is intuitive. Thus far, I am unable to turn it on at will; however, I am aware when it comes."

The work of the Parkersburg craftsman is in the permanent collections of 20 museums, and he has represented West Virginia at numerous national shows, including The Smithsonian Craft Show and the Philadelphia Museum of Art Craft Show. Sartorius also served on the board of the Collectors of Wood Art, a national wood art advocacy organization.

Sartorius had surgery to remove polyps caused by nearly 40 years of breathing sawdust. He plans to use the fellowship award to educate himself further and explore the latest technologies to reduce wood dust in the woodworker's studio.

## **Brian VanNostrand: Gifts from the Kiln to the Community**

Brian VanNostrand thrives on exploring new ways and techniques to make his wheel-thrown clay works. As he has noted, he would continue making pots and other clay works even if no one wanted them. He especially likes using different clay bodies to experiment with varied textures, colors and the clay interaction with wood ash.

His pottery is distinctive for the interesting impressions he makes in the clay using unusual instruments such as bobby pins, gears from clocks and broken toys. The surfaces of his clay creations are further enriched by a high temperature firing in wood-fired kilns and the direction of the flame and ash, which alter the surfaces. VanNostrand has served as a mentor to aspiring potters and as an avid supporter and promoter of Tamarack.

"Tamarack has been a boon to West Virginia artists, including myself, by providing a handsome venue for the exhibition and sale of their work while leaving the matter of sales to trained clerks and marketing experts," VanNostrand said. "Most persons engaged in creative arts would much rather be engaged in the creative process than take the time to market and sell their work."

VanNostrand also has been active in trying to save the school in Hacker Valley, his hometown, and the U.S. Post Office. He bought a historic building in downtown Buckhannon and provided rent free for a year to the Artistry On Main, a cooperative to help local artisans sell their works and to help the local economy.

His preservation efforts also reach to a local cemetery in which the graves are marked with deteriorated wooden headstones. VanNostrand worked with his assistant to make clay plaques for about 70 of the graves so that the names and locations of those buried there would not be lost. He plans to use the fellowship award to continue research into vitreous, low-temperature clay bodies designed for wood-firing.

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Contact: Sally Barton, Executive Director, Tamarack Artisan Foundation  
[sally@tamarackfoundation.org](mailto:sally@tamarackfoundation.org) or 304.926.3770