

# ALLEN HOCKENBERY

AAW 2014 HONORARY LIFETIME MEMBER

Elizabeth and Frank Amigo



**A**l Hockenbery's involvement with woodturning started in 1975 when he bought his first lathe, a 12" Delta that he turned on in his limited spare time. He and his wife Sherry were busy building shelves, a kitchen island, and furniture for their new home. In the 1980s, Al outfitted his shop with woodworking tools and equipment from auctions in Annapolis, Maryland, that were held when schools were phasing out shop classes. He and a friend would buy the items, fix them up, keep a few, and sell the rest. When all the furniture for his home was finally built, Al became more serious about turning. As many beginners do, he began with pens and ornaments.

Al joined the AAW in 1992 after Sherry submitted a flier for membership from a Craft Supplies order. He hasn't looked back since.

## Chesapeake Woodturners

*The AAW Resource Directory* has long been a valuable tool for connecting woodturners. In 1993, Frank Amigo invited Al to accompany Chesapeake Woodturners club members on their annual trip to Maryland's Eastern Shore, where

the bottom of a bowl. Al has been so encouraging and so generous." Al's next class at Maryland Hall was with David Ellsworth, followed by others with Michael Peterson, Christian Burchard, and Johannes Michelsen. Combining these classes with intrinsic motivation, Al became a



**Al Hockenbery is a tireless advocate for the field of woodturning and a terrific resource for organizing woodturning events on national, regional, and local levels.**

-Al Stirt

member Temple Blackwood had marked trees that could be harvested on his family farm. Al happily went along, and by the time he returned home, he had seen a demonstration on turning birdhouses, gotten a supply of fresh wood, and become the newest member of the chapter. This was an auspicious beginning for Al's extensive involvement with the Chesapeake Woodturners.

By the time of the Chesapeake Woodturners' second regional symposium, in 1994, Al was an active member and served as assistant to John Jordan during his rotations at the symposium. By then, Al had taken a five-day class with Liam O'Neill offered by Maryland Hall for the Creative Arts in Annapolis, which he says really got him going in turning. The class was held in Margaret Lospinuso's studio in Laurel, Maryland. Margaret, an active member of Chesapeake Woodturners and a long-time friend of Al's, says, "Al was the one who taught me a surefire technique to keep from going through

proficient turner. Over time, he assisted in workshops with Al Stirt, Trent Bosch, Lyle Jamieson, Cindy Drozda, Jimmy Clewes, and David Ellsworth. Meeting and getting to know nationally known turners paved the way for Al's future involvement on AAW's symposium committee.

Al eventually became the coordinator for woodturning classes offered at Maryland Hall. He also taught woodturning there and he and Sherry developed the hall's youth turning program. He was chapter treasurer of Chesapeake Woodturners for four years and served as president for another four years. Al had an individual show at the Maryland Federation of Art on State Circle in Annapolis and was selected for a number of other juried shows. He and Sherry, also a woodturner, were juried in to several craft shows at Quiet Waters Park, a beautiful county facility outside Annapolis.

Soon, Al began teaching outside of Maryland. He taught both hollow forms and bowls at John C. Campbell Folk School in North Carolina. Regional symposiums ►

*Dark Storm Rising*, 2013, Eucalyptus and Maple, 4" x 10" x 5" (10cm x 25cm x 13cm)

offered another opportunity for demonstrations: Virginia, New York, Colorado, and Florida. When Al and Sherry moved to Florida in 2004, the Chesapeake Woodturners extended them lifetime membership.

Al and Sherry lost no time getting involved in local Florida woodturning clubs. Al worked in the hands-on workshop at the Florida symposium and donated several days of “a day in the workshop.” He continues to host club sawdust sessions in his shop and has given numerous demonstrations for the Pensacola, Jacksonville, Sarasota, and other Florida clubs, including

all-day demonstrations on topics from basic skills to advanced turning techniques. In 2013, he arranged a tour of Florida clubs for Al Stirt, who stated, “Al was a generous host and guide. He and Sherry chauffeured me around on my days off, visiting state parks and other wild areas. They also helped to fulfill my longtime wish of paddling with alligators.”

Furthering his connections to the national woodturning scene, Al initiated a master class program in central Florida by inviting Jimmy Clewes, Cindy Drozda, Trent Bosch, and Al Stirt to give weeklong classes

in the Hockenbery shop. Eventually, the Florida clubs picked up sponsorship of the classes, and David Ellsworth spent a week there teaching. Trent Bosch and Al Stirt have returned for classes. According to Al Stirt, “Al’s understated organizational and networking skills, as well as his understanding of what a demonstrator/teacher needs, have been valuable to me and to many others. I love teaching and demonstrating, but the process of organizing dates, equipment, and materials can be daunting. Al’s attention to all of these things, and his empathic



(Clockwise from top left)  
Al Hockenbery at home in Florida

Trent Bosch, Sherry Hockenbery, and Al at the John C. Campbell Folk School in North Carolina.

David Ellsworth, Al, and Rudolph Lopez take a break in the Hockenbery shop.

Al assists a young turner at Maryland Hall for the Creative Arts.

Untitled, Boxelder, tallest is 11" (28cm)

response to my needs and interests, relieved most of the stress of traveling and let me devote my energies to teaching.” Al Stirt’s recognition of Al’s organizational talents foreshadowed the deep involvement Hockenbery would have nationally with the AAW in future years.

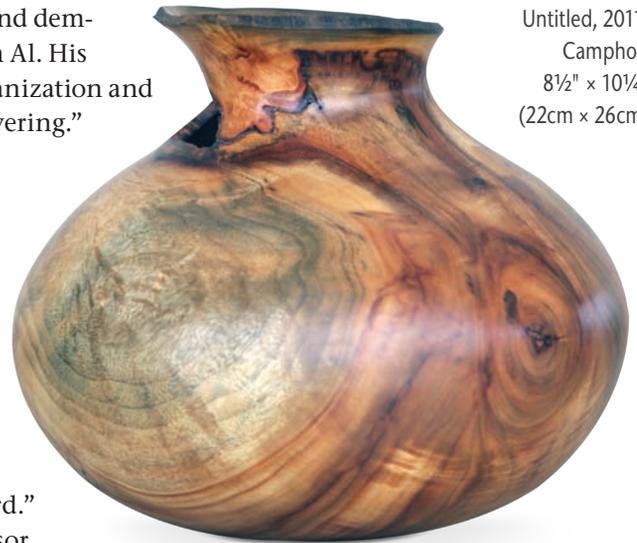
Al was selected to demonstrate at two AAW symposiums—Charlotte, North Carolina, in 2000, where he, along with Sherry, made a presentation on techniques for teaching kids, and in Hartford, Connecticut, in 2010, where he demonstrated turning a ball in a ball and a natural edge Southwest hollow form. He taught a youth turning class at the Albuquerque and Portland symposiums. Trent Bosch states, “I first met Al in 2000 at the national symposium in Charlotte, where we shared a demo room. I did not know it then, but Al and Sherry would later become some of my most cherished woodturning friends. Throughout the past 14 years, I have

had the honor to teach and demonstrate side by side with Al. His commitment to this organization and medium has been unwavering.”

### Involvement with the AAW

Al served on the AAW Board from 2006 through 2008 and for several months in 2009. According to David Ellsworth, “Al was a critically important member of the board.” Al remains a board advisor.

Board President Dale Larson states, “Al’s calm demeanor and thoughtful responses were a great help during board discussions. I would come up with some idea and Al would calmly say, ‘Well, you might want to think about....’” Al chaired the nominating committee for one year, was a committee member for one year, an EOG committee member one year, and a youth committee member for five years. Currently, Al regularly participates in the AAW forum and promotes the AAW through activities at numerous national woodworking shows.



Untitled, 2011,  
Camphor,  
8½" × 10¼"  
(22cm × 26cm)

It is the symposium committee, however, where Al has made his greatest contribution. He has been a member since 2006 and has developed the symposium schedule of room assignments, videographers, and equipment for each symposium since 2007. In 2009, Dale Larson took over as committee chair. He now states, “I figured I would be responsible for all the computer work and scheduling related to the symposium. Al stepped in and said he would be happy to continue. I don’t think our members understand all ▶



*Nested Spheres*, 2011, Eucalyptus, diameters  
5", 3", and 2" (13cm, 8cm, 5cm)



Untitled, 2002, Maple burl, 12" dia (30cm)

*Olla*, 2003, Spalted maple burl, 13" dia (33cm)



Al and Sherry visiting woodturning friends in Colorado

the work that goes into the master schedule for the symposium or the 14 demonstration rooms and other events. Al understands how one thing at the symposium impacts other events. Al's historical knowledge is invaluable to the smooth running of the symposium."

David Ellsworth terms Al "a master of unruffled, no-feathers-flying efficiency. And that's exactly the type of

person you want to juggle the 'hidden business' of the AAW, working out the intricacies of scheduling demonstrations and lectures at our annual symposiums. And what a mind tangle of a job it is." Trent Bosch adds, "The changes, special requests, and making sure everyone has their needs met is an enormous task and Al has it down to a science." Al improved videography by suggesting the recruitment of

the best videographers from regional symposiums. He continues to develop maps showing AAW membership and chapters for use in planning AAW symposiums. Working jointly with Dale Larson, they created the all-important symposium manual for AAW's procedures and policies.

In Al Stirt's estimation, "Al Hockenbery is a tireless advocate for the field of woodturning and a terrific resource for organizing woodturning events on national, regional, and local levels." And Dale Larson states, "Al puts in time all year round promoting AAW, the symposium, and woodturning in general. People like Al Hockenbery make AAW a great community." Thank you, Al, for your efforts on behalf of the AAW, and congratulations on well-deserved recognition! ■



*Transformation*, 2004, Black sassafras, 5½" x 9½" x 5" (14cm x 24cm x 13cm)

*Elizabeth and Frank Amigo are longtime AAW members.*