

# Dick Gerard

## 2004 Lifetime Honorary Member



To get a true picture of Dick Gerard's contributions to the AAW, you must turn back the clock to the days when there were fewer than one hundred members in a fledgling, struggling band of turners.

By chance, Dick was just getting excited about woodturning when his wife, Nancy, noticed an ad for "Woodturning: Vision and Concept," an event David Ellsworth put together at the Arrowmont School of Arts and Crafts in Gatlinburg, TN. The October 1985 gathering drew 200 or 250 woodturners from around the world.

"As I was preparing to give the welcoming address," David remembers, "Dick came up on stage with an arm full of papers to pass out to participants on how to start an organization. And the rest, as they say, is history."

"I made a nuisance of myself," Dick recalls. "I must have bothered David Ellsworth every other hour the whole week with a new idea.

"That trip to Arrowmont in 1985 was actually my introduction to the woodturning community. I got excited about woodturning in 1981 after reading an article in *Fine Woodworking*. I immediately realized how many things you could do with wood.

"I was interested in networking, but couldn't find any guild for turners. I wasn't a polltaker, but I worked up a survey before going to Arrowmont to see if there was any interest in starting a group."

Opening photos: Nancy Gerard

There, Dick stumbled into a mother lode of interested turners. On the porch of the Arrowmont's Red Barn, discussions percolated into the evening about forming some type of woodturner's group.

When the AAW incorporated in 1986, the original AAW board members were assigned numbers 1 through 9. Dick Gerard—the Indianapolis newcomer with a survey—was assigned #13.

Just a year later, Dick was invited to join the AAW board. He later served as treasurer through the "crazy hard effort to grow the organization." For a snapshot of the financial hard times, board rules dictated that every AAW check over \$50 required the treasurer's okay.

When Dick retired from the board in December 1992, he devoted more time to exhibiting at local and regional shows and other aspects of his turning-addiction career.

"By 1995, I started cutting back on the number of shows," Dick reflects. "I was doing more what people wanted to buy and not what I wanted to do. After thinking things through, I started to do experimental work—woodturning series that pleased me. This is what I should have been doing all along."

Remembering a Clay Foster suggestion to keep a notebook of ideas, Dick started to fill pages with sketches of profiles, textures, notes, and thoughts that popped into his head. He now draws heavily upon his notebook for ideas and inspiration.

In less than two years, Dick will retire from 32 years of civil service duty (he currently writes and maintains Department of Defense computer programs). He looks forward to spending more time in his shop. With Nancy, he plans to travel to visit turning friends.

*See the AAW web site for photos of Dick's recent work.*



**"Hedge Hog III," maple burl, 18" x 7".**



**"Vortex I," Australian grass tree, manzanita burl, copper leaf, 13".**



**"Father and Son," maple burl bowl tops on ebonized maple.**



**"Dancing Men," painted and carved sycamore, 8" x 3 1/4".**

Turning photos: Jerry Anthony