

Robert W. Curtis was born in Dearborn, Michigan, the firstborn of William and Elizabeth. His parents, though not college educated, recognized the importance of exposing him to available culture. Many weekends were spent at the Detroit Institute of Art, attending concerts, and plays. When he entered school, Bob was privileged to attend the Greenfield Village Schools where beside the basics the arts were integrated into educational life; drawing, painting, weaving, pottery all were offered from day one; generally with an emphasis on the early American tradition of each craft. Of course vocal and instrumental music and traditional dance were a regular part of education. This grounding had an influence on Bob's later development.

Bob's family was always involved in community and that influenced most of Bob's life's focus. As a student in high school he broadened his vista but without classes in visual art - that came when he started college. His first college path focused on architecture but difficulty in math and chemistry soon helped change direction toward Interior Design. He received a degree in Interior Design from the University of Michigan; while there he minored in drawing and ceramics and, most importantly pursued art education courses. It was the influence of the art education faculty that led him to enter the field of art education and an active life in the professional association. Further pursuit for the Masters led him to major in Metalsmithing with minors in Sculpture and Ceramics. This diverse study made for a better grounding in the classroom.

Bob began his professional career in 1960 in the Wayne Westland School District educating in elementary, junior high and senior high art settings. He immediately became active in the curriculum development in his district and in the Region 2 MAEA. MAEA became an important element in Bob's career because he realized that this would be an opportunity to expand his knowledge and also to influence the acceptance of art in the general curriculum. Bob served on the MAEA Council from mid 1960's until the late 1970's. In 1976-1977 he served as MAEA president which led him into leadership positions at the NAEA, His first year at NAEA Assembly was 1976; he co-chaired Ways and Means in 1977, became assembly secretary in 1978-1979, and was elected to the position of National Secondary Director-Elect in 1979. In 1983 Bob was elected NAEA President Elect and served as NAEA President 1985-1987; he is the only NAEA President that served while still maintaining a full time teaching schedule in the junior high school. He was on the committee to develop the National Art Education Foundation and has served as a life trustee

since its inception; he currently serves on the Executive/Finance, Grants, Development, Planned Giving and Nominating committees. Upon retirement he accepted the invitation to chair the NAEA-RAEA where he served six years and developed a sound financial structure and a structured awards system along with an updating of the Constitution. Along with the MAEA he also became very active in the Michigan Education Association; thus providing the opportunity to inform other disciplines in the necessities of art education for all students. For ten years in the late 1970's Bob chaired an MEA group "The Council of State Organizations" (representing most subject matter organizations that were then affiliated with the MEA.) Another opportunity to inform not only the importance of art education but ways that different disciplines could enhance each other.

Bob's family believed in serving the community. Along with his educational pursuits Bob has generously served the community being active in the Dearborn Community Arts Council including as president, chair of the Dearborn VSA, administering the Homecoming At Fair for over 20 years, chairing the Padzieski Art Gallery for over ten years. Bob served on the board of the Dearborn Historical Society and was a member of the committee to gain historic status for the Ford Homes Historic District in Dearborn.

From 1985 -1995, in addition to being with junior high students during the day, Bob also taught Basic Design Fundamentals at the (Center, now) College of Creative Studies. An experience just as rewarding as in the public school since there is an eagerness in most students to enhance their appreciation and their abilities.

Since retiring Bob has continued to serve his profession and his community. Bob served ten years on the VSAMichigan Board, two as secretary. Highlights of VSA service included offering drop-in arts experiences for Special Olympics Winter Games. He is a regular advisor to the Dearborn Community Fund, the POP Design Project, the Artist Selection Committee for residents of the City Hall Artspace development in Dearborn. He is an active committee chair at his condo home dealing with the enhancement of the public areas.

For Bob there is no spare time as each moment is a treasure and an opportunity to grow. When possible he enjoys spending time at his lake home, a great place to meditate and regroup. He enjoys the company of his brother, his chosen family and his many friends. He is even finding time to develop some art work. Currently his passion is photography with the desire to use images to develop new constructs.

Each of us has a destiny, to do good for humanity, for our planet. To find a path that we love and cherish enhances our journey. Bob hopes that his journey has been a benefit for those with whom he has come in contact. He hopes that everyone inner field sees teaching as not a job but a lifelong passion. Every moment is a teachable moment. Bob's life has been full of wonderful experiences. Success does not come from the work of one individual but through the support of all those who touch your life. Bob is thankful for having been touched by so many wonderful people who have been a part of making his life so rich and satisfying.