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And More!

Each Sculpture Has A Story

by Kathie Huddleston, Staff



Deb Wood

For Deb Wood, each sculpture she does has a story behind it. She starts with the head, then the face, body, posture and attitude. "Then the story starts to come."

No wonder her Li'l Bits and Happy Habits figurines seem to have so much personality.

"I visualize everything in my head," said Deb during an interview with the *Collectors' Bulletin*. "Believe me, I do not draw."

Deb studied at the Minneapolis College of Art and Design and Bemidji

State College. After trying different media, she eventually found her niche with polymer clays. "I have played all my life," she said.

Married, with two children, and a growing career, Deb's life was blessed. Demand for her charming sculptures was starting to grow.

However, on January 15, 1994, the tranquility she cherished in her life was shattered when the car her daughter, Amanda, was driving was struck by a truck. Amanda's recovery was long and painful.

"When a situation like that comes it pushes you off the rail. It was time, I realized, to stop playing. Feeling I could no longer meet the demands for my original work, the idea for a gift line developed."

At first she was concerned the gift line wouldn't be close enough to her original work. However, she discovered she didn't have to worry. "The gift line figurines are an exact duplicate of my actual work. It's called direct casting."

The process that preserves the charming faces Deb creates is one of the reasons her Li'l Bits and Happy Habits are so popular. Her original line of Happy Habit Nuns are sold out until more can be manufactured.

The 8" tall Happy Habits are made of cold-cast and handpainted. The 3 1/2" Li'l Bits are also made of cold-cast, but have real hair made of mohair.

Deb originally created her whimsical nuns for a special order. At first she couldn't imagine how to make the nuns come to life. But after working with the clay, they eventually took shape.

Deb talks about her sculptures almost as if they are people, and she's happy to tell you the story behind her creations.



Sister Mary Grace



Sister Mary Compassion

"Sister Mary Grace gets a little dizzy now and then. The other nuns just stand back and pray for her and hope she's okay," said Deb.

Sister Mary Paprika uses too much spice when she cooks. The other nuns, of course, wouldn't say anything. However, they don't look forward to dinner when it's her turn to cook. Sister Mary Compassion is based on the nun she met when her daughter was in the hospital. Sister Trudy ministered patient comfort in the catholic hospital.

"Sister Trudy doesn't look like Sister Mary Compassion, but her representation is the same."

The nuns are so popular, some pieces will be retiring soon, with more to retire in the future. This popularity has brought about Deb's first limited edition piece. Sister Mary Compassion is not only the first nun with a white habit, she's also limited to 2,500 pieces.

Deb also creates stories for her Li'l Bits and the Bits are often inspired by the children in her neighborhood. For the first time boys were added to the line. The football player was directly inspired by her son.

With eight new Happy Habits and six new Li'l Bits debuting, Deb keeps busy. "I've thoroughly enjoyed meeting the people. They tell me they look at my pieces and smile."

Deb herself is smiling these days. Most importantly, her daughter is in college now and doing well. But also, her Happy Habits, Li'l Bits and other

creations are keeping her busy.

"It's been really fun for me. I try to keep happiness in my work and I try to make other people happy through my work."

There's not much doubt she's succeeding.

Editor's Note: I love her work! Retailers... a must for your shelves! For more information on Deb's creations call Studio Collection at 1-800-314-7748.



Football

Birthdays

Angela Marie