



# Tile Heritage Foundation

for research and preservation of ceramic surfaces

Founded in July 1987 Tile Heritage will celebrate its 30th anniversary next year. Supporters like YOU... members, major contributors, industry sponsors, generous grantors... everyone... have made possible the continued fulfillment of the Foundation's mission to Document and Preserve tile history in the U.S., both past and present. THANK YOU!



Detail of John Wehrle's "Walking Beam," approximately 7' x 52', located at Chevron's Richmond Technology Center, Richmond, California.  
Photos courtesy of the artist.

## *E-News for Fall 2016*

## Wehrle's "Walking Beam"

### *Here's What's Below*

#### Wehrle's "Walking Beam"

**Donna Billick: Miss BEE Haven**

**Art/Science Fusion**

**Tile Heritage Prize:**

**"Stormfront" by Paula Gill**

**Exhibition:**

**Batchelder: Tilemaker**

From artist **John Wehrle**: "The mural at Chevron's Richmond Technology Center depicts a history of devices used to extract petroleum from the earth, beginning with horse drawn treadmills from the 19th century to offshore platforms in the 20th. Pump Jacks (also known as oil horses, oil jacks, donkey pumpers, nodding donkeys, grasshoppers, rocking horses, dinosaurs, thirsty birds, horse head pumps) use a **walking beam** to convert rotary motion of the wheel into a vertical reciprocating drive. Additionally there are elements in the design particular to the location, such as the ospreys that had a home built for them on a local refinery tower,



the monarchs and milkweed that have made the Tech Center a certified Monarch way station, and Lindbergh's plane which was powered by Standard Oil fuel for its historic crossing." (Find the plane in the image below).

"The 12" tiles (364 in all), made to order at **B&W Tile Company** in Gardena, were bisque-fired to cone 1 and glazed at our Richmond studio using **Duncan Concepts** underglazes fired to cone 05. It took nineteen firings in a **Skutt** electric kiln, approximately twenty-four tiles at a time, each firing sixty-two hours long to minimize stress. Only eight tiles broke in the process, but some were fired twice to gain occasional improvement. Each tile was carefully numbered and labelled on the reverse side. The piece measures approx. 7' x 52' and took a year from start to finish.

"I had generous volunteer help from Robin Cooper and invaluable assistance from my wife Susan. Thanks also to Jos Sances and John Toki for technical advice. **Rick Alexander** and **Air-Rick Sory** from **Tile West** in Novato did a fantastic job installing the work. I always appreciate people who know what they are doing. Makes me look good.



Rick Alexander (left) and Air-Rick Sory, Tile West Inc., perform the installation.



“For the design, I worked from many reference photos garnered from my own files and from Google images, assembling it all in an imaginary landscape. Typically, I make a small painted maquette and use a traditional grid system to scale the design.

“This was an employee-driven project. My thanks to all at the Tech Center who made this happen. The tile mural is incorporated into an interior plaza and is not visible to the public. However, I wanted to

share this project with friends and colleagues, and these photographs will have to suffice.”

John Wehrle was born in San Antonio and raised all over Texas. Never a gifted athlete, he compensated by becoming the best airplane drawer in the fourth grade. He later studied art at Texas Tech and after serving in Vietnam as “combat artist,” he attended Pratt Institute.

“As you can see from my website (see [troutinhand.com](http://troutinhand.com)), I am primarily a large scale painter, but every so often I like to make something I think might outlive me.”



Muralist, John Wehrle, at his studio in Richmond, California.

## Donna Billick, Miss BEE Haven

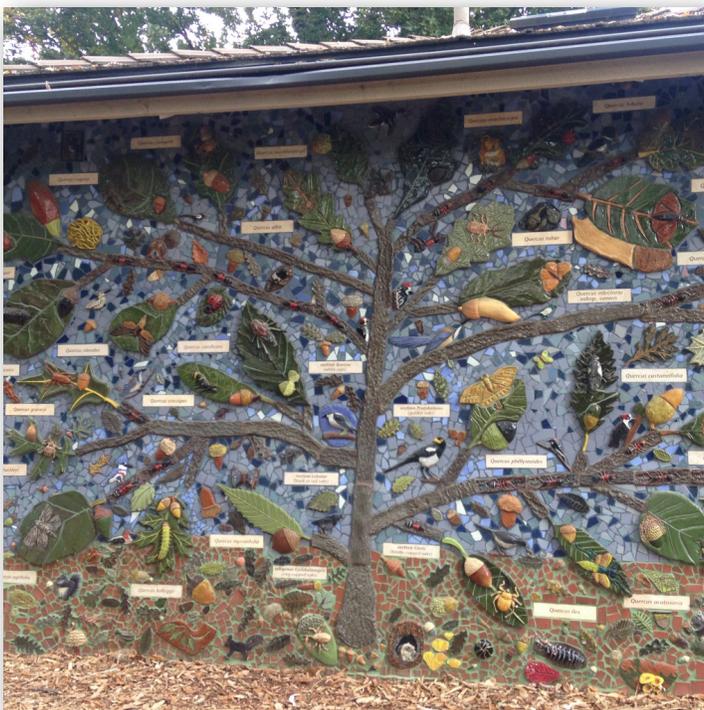
### Co-Founder Retires after 20 Years

Internationally-known ceramist and mosaicist, Donna Billick, together with her friend and colleague UC Davis Entomology Professor Diane Ullman, founded the Art/Science Fusion Program, representing a new paradigm for education for the 21st century. The basic concept demonstrates that teaching and learning are essentially experiences of sharing. There are patterns, harmonies, symbols, and perceptions that are shared across borders and disciplines, where knowledge and wisdom unite and define who we are. The program creates accessibility and inclusion for people that would otherwise fear science, or fear art, and reaches for expression within the classroom that creates value and a shared meaning system. This new and innovative classroom learning experience creates collaborations between different kinds of students and the community. The learning outcomes for the students are extended to life-long learning opportunities for the public.

The initial project was a “Tree of Life” installation on a new campus comfort center at University of California Davis. The 17’ x 11’ ceramic mosaic of a Valley Oak tree and its associated insect fauna was created in 2006 by Entomology 1 students, arboretum staff, community members and elementary school children.



Donna Billick, Miss BEE-Haven, Art/Science Fusion.  
Photo by Kathy Keatley Garvey.



“Tree of Life,” initial project of Art/Science Fusion Program.



Detail, “Tree of Life” (lower left).



Donna Billick and Sheila Menzies share a moment at the “Oak Circle of Life.”

The Scrub Jay (below) can be seen collecting and storing acorns for later use. The jay often hides more acorns than it needs, and those that are not retrieved and eaten have a chance to germinate and grow into a new tree. The jays therefore provide a valuable service as distributors of acorns which help to propagate the species.



Each circle in the mosaic surface of this seat wall depicts a milestone in the life of a mighty English oak tree, starting in the year 1210.



One of many mosaic tree markers in the Arboretum at UC Davis produced by students in the Art/Science Fusion Program.

The Art/Science Fusion Program is part of a broader, developing initiative: the UC Davis Arboretum GATEways Project, which offers a transformative vision of the role of the university with the Arboretum as the connecting point between the academic enterprise and the public. The GATEways Project aims to create an open, accessible campus that supports lifelong learning for the community and enriches student scholarship. Within the physical GATEways, the students’ artwork is featured prominently and permanently.



Nature's Gallery Court in the Arboretum on the campus of UC Davis, a beautiful creation of the Art/Science Fusion Program, 2007-08.

## Nature's Gallery Court

Nature's Gallery features the work of students participating in the Art/Science Fusion Program, each of whom selected a local, drought-resistant plant along with its pollinators and natural enemies to create a 16" x 18" image in clay that was then glazed and fired.

In the summer of 2007 the Gallery of tiles was shipped to Washington, DC and temporarily installed at the United States Botanical Garden in front of the U.S. Capitol as the centerpiece of the annual meeting of the American Public Gardens Association. It was estimated that more than 300,000 visitors witnessed the ceramic display, which was returned in the fall to the UC Davis campus for permanent reinstallation in a "court" specially designed for it.

## Donna Billick's Miss Bee Haven

The central focus in the half-acre Haagen-Dazs Honey Bee Haven on Bee Biology Road at UC Davis is "Miss Bee Haven" herself, the 6-foot mosaic ceramic sculpture by **Donna Billick**, co-founder and co-director of the Art/Science Fusion Program.

Now retired from her university responsibilities, Donna can expend her energies at Todos Artes, her colorful studio workshop in Todos Santos near the southern tip of the Baja Peninsula.

Joining Billick at "**Heaven on Earth 2017**" will be architectural ceramists **Peter King** and **Xinia Marin**, January 9th-13th, 2017. For details see: [donnaibillickart.com](http://donnaibillickart.com). Register now!



## Tile Heritage Prize

Designed to encourage participation in juried exhibitions, the **Tile Heritage Prize** is awarded to the artist whose tile, in the opinion of the juror, best represents the ceramic traditions of North America. The prize itself is monetary and includes a year's Centurian membership in the Foundation and placement in the Member Tile Gallery online.

At the Juried Show, a feature of Artisan Tile Northwest's Handmade Tile Festival in Seattle, November 5-6, 2016, juror **Nadine Edelstein** chose the winner of this year's Tile Heritage Prize: **Paula Gill, Red Step Studio**, for her **"Stormfront, Rialto Beach."** 16" x 12", paper clay with underglazes, fired to cone 03.

### From the artist, Paula Gill:

"In 1997 I rented a small clay studio in a friend's unheated North Seattle garage in trade for walking her two dogs twice a week. We both thought we were getting the best deal. At the end of a year of wheel throwing dinnerware, slab rolling tiles, hand-building birdbaths and decorative one of a kind bowls, I hosted a show in my living room and invited, literally, everyone I knew. I decided that whatever sold the most would be the focus of my new fine crafts business. Needless to say, tiles won! And I have made countless hand-carved and painted terra cotta and white clay tiles ever since.

"I currently sell mostly online through my [Etsy shop](#) and my website [redstep.com](http://redstep.com). I am represented by Collective Visions Gallery in Bremerton, Washington and White Bird Gallery in Cannon Beach, Oregon.

"I also do a lot of custom work for customers wanting unique pieces for fireplaces, kitchens and bathrooms. I have been selected to create several large multi-tile pieces for public buildings and 1% for the Arts projects. My largest commission to date was to create 236 unique tiles on the theme 'Healing with Nature' for patient rooms in the UC Medical Center in Irvine, California."



**"Stormfront, Rialto Beach" by Paula Gill, 2015.**  
Photo by Jim Rieck.

**Juror: Nadine Edelstein.** A resident of Vashon Island, Puget Sound, Washington, Nadine is a licensed tile and stone contractor as well as a mosaic artist. Often in collaboration with her clients, she designs and embellishes interior and exterior spaces with ceramic, stone and mixed media materials. See [Tile Design by Edelstein](#).



## EXHIBITION!

**Batchelder: Tilemaker**

**September 21, 2016 through**

**February 12, 2017**



*Batchelder: Tilemaker* is the first local exhibit dedicated solely to the life and work of this extraordinary artist and educator. Ernest Batchelder. Exhibit curator, Dr. Robert Winter.

Ernest A. Batchelder was an author, designer, educator, artist, and tilemaker who settled in Pasadena in the early 20th century. *Batchelder: Tilemaker* celebrates the recent donation to the Museum of a collection of Batchelder tiles and archives by leading Batchelder authority, Robert Winter, PhD, who also serves as exhibition curator.



**Pasadena Museum's Batchelder YouTube Video**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V6ISrWaj6Ag&feature=youtu.be>

**Full Exhibition details are available at the Pasadena Museum of History website:**

<http://pasadenahistory.org/all-exhibits/batchelder-tilemaker/>



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**MEMBERSHIP:** <http://www.tileheritage.org/page7/page7.html>