

SOUTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY EDWARDSVILLE



Amanda Cooper

SIUE Marketing & Communications

Office: (618) 650-3600

March 6, 2020

SEGUE: SIUE Friends of Art Gearing Up for 43rd Annual Art Auction

On this week's episode of Segue, Southern Illinois University Edwardsville's weekly radio program exploring the lives and work of the people on campus and beyond, College of Arts and Sciences (CAS) Dean Greg Budzban, PhD, interviews Laura Strand, head of textile arts in the Department of Art and Design; Pam Decoteau, retired faculty and Friends of Art (FOA) president; and Andi Smith, FOA board member.

This episode of Segue airs at 9 a.m. on Sunday, March 8. Listeners can tune in to WSIE 88.7 FM The Sound or siue.edu/wsie.

FOA was created as a nonprofit organization in 1977 by community members who wanted to provide funding towards materials and experiences for SIUE art students. Currently, FOA and the Department of Art and Design are preparing to host their 43rd annual Art Auction, an event featuring over 100 original artworks donated by faculty, visiting artists, alumni, friends and advanced art students.

"What are some of the connections you have to the Department of Art and Design?" inquires Budzban.

"In 1965, my father became faculty at SIUE, as it was just beginning," answers Smith. "I was a small child in those days, but I grew up in the art department. I spent most of my childhood roaming through the studios, and it's personal to me that these students have the resources they need."

"I came to teach art history at SIUE in 1974 and am now retired," adds Decoteau. "I was one of the original members of FOA, and I've seen the auction held in many different buildings across campus and off campus."

"I came here 25 years ago to teach the textile program, and when I first arrived, everyone talked about the art auction," says Strand. "It has proven to be such an important asset, and I've remained dedicated to donating artwork each year. Currently, I am working as the faculty representative on the FOA board, and it's exciting to see the auction happening from the base and coming forward."

"Andi, I've bid on and won a few pieces of your dad's work," says Budzban. "Former faculty and students play a critical role in the pieces that are available for bidders."

"My dad, Mike Smith, taught painting and drawing in the program for over 30 years," says Smith. "He died about 15 years ago, but the family decided that the rest of his artwork should go to FOA auctions to help support the program. That's what he wanted."

This year, two of the late Smith's pieces will be auctioned off at the event, including one of his famous hexagram works.

"We also have a number of alumni who are incredible in how frequently they donate to the event," adds Smith. "They remember how these funds went to bringing visiting artists to campus and student travel, along with all of the other things that make the department more interesting. They want current students to have that same experience."

"That shows the enduring connection that our students and alumni have to the department and the institution," says Budzban. "There are so many wonderful stories of alumni giving back like this, and it's always great to see."

In addition to alumni donations, local community artists donate pieces each year to further educational opportunities for art students. Higher level students also play a role in the auction by donating works they've completed in class.

"One student from my weaving class won an award for a piece she donated," says Strand. "She used that money to buy a loom. The experience fed her and feeds everyone around us. There's many benefits to giving for these students."

More than \$1,000 of awards are given to students during the event. Additionally, there are awards given to non-student professionals who donate original artwork and to alumni in the area.

The 43rd annual Art Auction will be held on Friday, March 20 in the Art West Gallery located in SIUE's Art and Design West building. Doors open at 6 p.m., and bidding begins at 7 p.m. Tickets are \$10 for the general public, and admission is free to all students, auction donors and members of FOA. For more information, visit foasiue.org.

Tune in at 9 a.m. on Sunday, March 8, to WSIE 88.7 The Sound to hear the entire conversation.

-SIUE-