

Missouri Artisans Association/Best of Missouri Hands History of Organization

The Best of Missouri's Hands Project was founded in 1985 by The University of Missouri Extension. It was an effort initiated by The Home-Based Business Committee of the Alternative for the 80's Project at the University, designed to provide opportunities for marketing assistance for the home-based Missouri art and craft communities.

Its purpose was to increase family income in rural areas where changes in agriculture and manufacturing had resulted in the loss of income opportunities. The showpiece of this project was a retail catalog, The Best of Missouri Hands, intended to provide visibility and marketing opportunities to help this segment of the community become independent entrepreneurs. Volume One of The Best of Missouri Hands was published in 1986 and worldwide distribution brought great success and national media attention. Volume two followed in 1988.

In 1989, the Home-Based Business Project spun off from the University and the volunteer organization, Missouri Artisans Business Development Association, known as MABDA, was formed. Volumes 3 and 4 of The Best of Missouri Hands soon followed. *Profiles of the State's Fine Artists and Craftsmen* was the last book published in 1996.

In order to become eligible to apply for 501c3 nonprofit classification, a change in name was made in 2002. Missouri Artisans Business Development Association (MABDA) became The Missouri Artisans Association (MAA) and The Best of Missouri Hands trademarked name was acquired to use as its common organizational name.

The mission of the organization became one that focuses on education, interaction and encouragement. Official 501c3 nonprofit status was approved in 2003 which was the realization of a long held vision for the organization. Membership is now over 400 people, from every corner of the state, from beginners to experienced artists, every media one could think of. It includes organizations, educators, business owners, writers and spouses.

The 80's *committeesl* project with the university started in 1983, but the one that launched the catalog did not come about until 1985 when funding came through for the first catalog. These 7-9 projects went through many hoops before getting approved and funded.

Eddie Pigg

Rural Sociological Society Business Manager

From: Mary Benjamin [mailto:marybenjamin@earthlink.net] Sent: Friday, May 04,2007 11:30 AM To: Pigg, Eddie Subject: RE: HELP!

Eddie thanks! I had some information from one of the catalogs that said 1985 so wanted to confirm the date with you. I don't think that I will be at the store Monday would love to see you, though! Take care, mary

-----Original Message -----From: Pigg, Eddie To: marybenjamin@earthlink.net Sent: 5/3/2007 10:48:51 AM Subject: RE: HELP!

Mary According to Ken Schneeberger, one of the head people on the 80's project, it started in 1984. May see you on Monday, Betty Feather is in town and we are having lunch. Betty hired me to work on the 80's project.

Eddie Pigg Rural Sociological Society Business Manager

From: Mary Benjamin [mailto:marybenjamin@earthlink.net] Sent: Wednesday, May 02,2007 1:22 PM To: Pigg, Eddie; Pigg, Eddie Subject: HELP!

Eddie when did Alternatives for the 80's begin? A reporter is trying to write a story about BOMH and we don't seem to find this date anywhere. I know that the first issue of the catalog was in 1986, right? Hope you can help we need to catch up with each other! Mary

Mary Benjamin marybenjamin@earthlink.net www.bluestemmissouricrafts.com BLUESTEM MISSOURI CRAFTS-a gallery featuring the work of 250 artists from Missouri and its neighboring states Top Retailer of American Crafts--Niche Magazine

For those of you who are new members, we thought you might be interested to know a little bit about the history of BOMH and how it began.

The Best of Missouri's Hands Project was a cooperative venture founded in 1985 by The University of Missouri, University Extension and Lincoln University. It was an effort initiated by The Home-Based Business Committee of the Alternative for the 80's Project designed to provide marketing assistance for home-based Missouri art and craft communities, under the guidance of Executive Director Edie Pigg.

Its purpose was to increase family income in rural areas where changes in agriculture and manufacturing had resulted in the loss of income opportunities. The showpiece of this project was a retail catalog featuring over 200 Missouri artists -*The Best of Missouri Hands* - published in 1986. Its successful, worldwide distribution increased visibility, encouraged entrepreneurship, and offered alternate marketing opportunities for the participants. As a result, this project and the catalog became the subject of wide media attention. Volume Two of *The Best of Missouri Hands* followed in 1988.

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In order to become eligible to apply for nonprofit state tax classification, a change in name was made in 2002. Missouri Artisans Business Development Association (MABDA) became The Missouri Artisans Association (MAA) and The Best of Missouri Hands trademarked name was acquired to use as its common organizational name. By redirecting our mission to one of education, interaction and encouragement, we were able to achieve our 501 (c) (3) nonprofit status in 2003. Energized and governed by its members, BOMH is a shining example of a successful grassroots organization. By bringing together a wonderfully diverse membership of over 400 people - artists, educators, retailers, and writers - it has developed a network of information and education, increased awareness of our heritage, and provided an access to the talents of our state artists and craftspeople.