

A Texas Woman's University Tradition Continues . . . with the new Bride's Book

The new Bride's Book continues a Texas Woman's University (TWU) tradition that started in 1939 with the dedication of the Little Chapel-in-the-Woods: **the entry of the names of the brides & grooms next to their wedding date in a Bride's Book**

This tradition of a Bride's Book is just another example of how truly special TWU and its students and staff are. As the students and staff labored to create the historical Little Chapel-in-the-Woods, they also thought ahead to future generations and created a book that would serve as a historical archive for families, in addition to being a handsome piece of artwork. This tradition of entering the names of brides and grooms into the TWU Bride's Book continued through October 1979.

Because this tradition was just too special to our TWU community not to continue and in commemoration of the refurbishment of the Little Chapel for TWU's 100th birthday celebration, a new Bride's Book was commissioned by TWU chancellor and President Dr. Ann Stuart. The planning for the new Bride's Book commenced in December 2001 just as TWU's Centennial Celebration activities were concluding. John Weinkein, Director of the Arts at TWU, answered the call to spearhead this project, and he identified the perfect TWU alumna, Lucia Smith, B.A. in 1996 and M.F.A. in 2001, to design the new Bride's Book unveiled during Homecoming on April 10, 2003. Lucia Smith tirelessly pursued the creation of the Bride's Book project from the initial inspiration to its successful fabrication involving many artistic partners. Both of the Bride's Books are on permanent display in the Balgg-Huey Library of TWU's Denton, Texas campus.

Artist's Statement . . .

"I desired to capture the quiet elegance and wonder that is used in subtle iconographic references throughout the Little Chapel and shares the reasons for her choices as follows:

- The choice of sterling silver for the book's cover was made not only because of its strong traditional ties to weddings and anniversaries, but also because its lovely patina is enhanced with age, just as the marriage relationship deepens with time.
- The Rose Window was used as the focal point on the cover because after stating their vows, it is the first sight the couple witness as they leave the chapel to begin their life anew.
- The parabolic arch of the Little Chapel is a symbol of strength and unity. It is this strength and unity that carry the weight of the chapel and protects its inhabitants, as in a marriage unity adds strength through commitment.
- The interior pages contain a single stained glass window image for each month. As the years pass month by month a full life will be experienced through one or several of the life choices depicted in these windows, be it motherhood, teaching, nursing, art or the myriad options open to modern women.
- The date of the ceremony and the name of the bride and groom are written in by hand in Calligraphy to add a human quality and give testament to the perfection and imperfection of life and the fact that there can be beauty in both.
- Finally, the Honduras Mahogany entry doors protect and open to the chapel that has become known to its admirers as the "Little Jewel." Similarly, the Honduras Mahogany presentation box protects and opens to reveal the treasured Bride's Book inside."

"When I began to design the new Bride's Book for the Little Chapel in-the-Woods my guidelines were to reflect the new millennium. In the process I also wanted to capture the simplicity and elegance of the chapel that would yield a statement to the brides of the 21st Century. I would like to add that working on this project has been an honor for me as an individual and as an artist. Not only because of the love that everyone has for the chapel and their open willingness to help, but because in some way I can repay my debt to TWU. As an

older student I earned by Bachelor of Fine Arts and Master of Arts degrees from TWU and my world has never been the same,” Lucia Smith.

Lucia credits her fellow artists in the creation of the new Bride’s Book:

Carved Honduras Mahogany Box:

Tony Schraufnagel artist and educator was born in Dallas Texas, He received his BFA and MFA from the University of North Texas and currently serves as Adjunct Professor of Sculpture at Texas Woman’s University and Fine Arts faculty member at Greenhill School in Addison. Completed six private commissions since 1995, his work can be found in 13 collections, he has participated in 38 group exhibitions and had three solo exhibitions.

Rose Window, Painting on Glass:

Gary Vigen has devoted 29 years to teaching junior high school art in Colorado. He describes stained glass painting as a very old technique that adds to the variety of glass art. Early cathedrals throughout the world exhibit stained glass that is painted to depict stories and scenes from the Bible. This technique is now experiencing a “rebirth.” No two pieces are alike because of the uniqueness of each piece of glass. His works have been featured in these magazines: *Glass Art*, *Colorado Homes and Styles*, and *Better Homes and Gardens*.

Technical Drawings:

Rubin Piper states “When the designer, Lucia Smith, came to me for technical help and production drawings for the Wedding Book, I was quick to accept the challenge. I knew one of the original architects of the chapel, Arch Swank. He and his wife, Patsy Swank, were among the first to welcome my wife and I to Texas and they both became valued friends. The chapel has elegance and intimacy appropriate to purpose and I feel the design of the book, reflecting the architectural elements, will make its own case. Arch Swank is among those commemorated in one of the chapel windows and I am pleased to have a small part in the development of this project.”

Graphics & Initial Proposal:

Josephine Zapata thinks “that everything we do is an expression. Art is just that, an expression. And I feel most comfortable expressing myself with visual Images in a reduced symbolic manner. Graphics is great for this type of challenge and I toss it in my bag of tricks. Other natural phenomena that I gravitate towards are patterns and designs. I believe that everything must eventually repeat itself. What makes an attractive composition is a subtlety of order with patterns. I've found several ways to make this expression in design not only in paints and materials but in graphics as well.”

Sterling Silver book:

Timothy Buck’s company, Invest-A-Cast, Inc. fabricated the custom sterling silver book cover for the Little Chapel in the Woods. Timothy Buck has 27 years experience in the custom design jewelry business and casts in all precious metals. Invest-A-Cast ordered special silver stock from Europe to accommodate the size of the book cover. Each piece was machine cut and special techniques were used to laser weld the pieces together. The design needed to be textured to show depth on the book cover. In the center of the book cover a bezel was created for the stained glass rose window to fit in the bezel on the front cover.