

Editor's Letter

"People develop connections to their community's special places. Art helps communities create, use, and appreciate these places."

—From *Art: A Community Connection* by Eldon Katter and Marilyn G. Stewart (Davis Publications, 2001).

Every place has a history. Think about one of your favorite places.

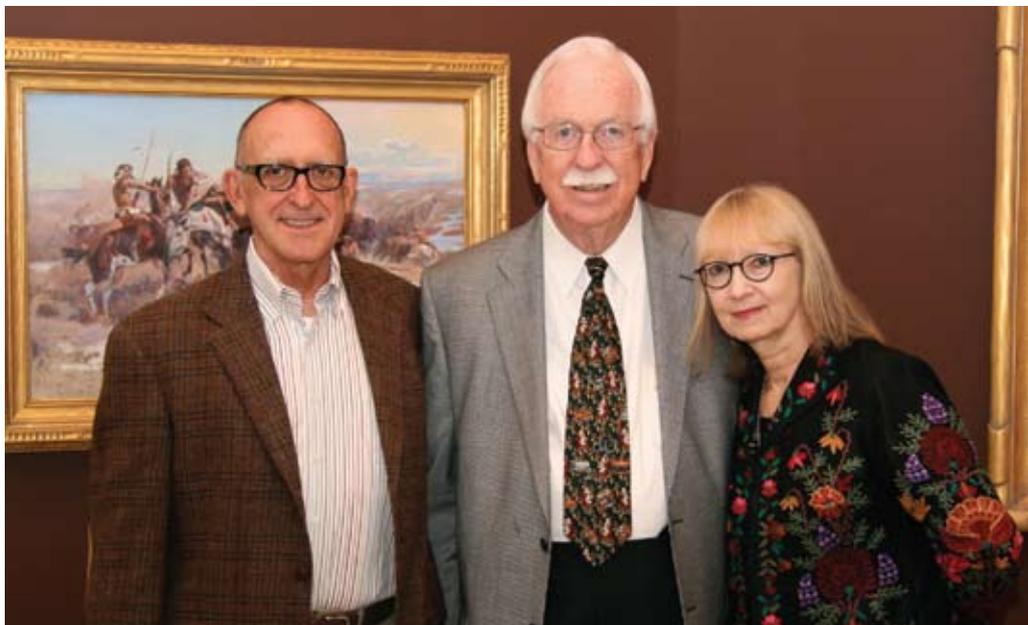
Is it a place in nature? Is it a built environment? What is its history? Have you ever tried to depict it in art, perhaps through photography, painting, or sculpture?

Art, music, and writing are all ways creative people have honored the idea of place and our human connections to it. Examples abound and can be found to appeal to every age level.

Thomas Moran's panoramic landscapes of Yellowstone National Park helped encourage Congress to establish the National Park System in 1916; *Oh, the Places You'll Go!* was the last book by Dr. Seuss; and Art21 has a comprehensive online teacher guide that examines how contemporary art addresses the idea of place (www.pbs.org/art21/films/place). There is no shortage of inspiration for this theme, no matter what grades you teach.

This past fall, I returned to a place with which I still have a deep connection. Ten years ago, I was a project coordinator for the North Texas Institute for Educators on the Visual Arts (NTIEVA) at the University of North Texas in Denton, Texas.

The vision of co-directors Jack Davis and William McCarter, NTIEVA was initially one of six art education institutes around the country funded by the Getty Center for the Arts. We worked locally with six school districts and five art museums in North Texas to present professional development for teams of art and classroom teachers. We also met and worked with our colleagues at our sister institutes.



William McCarter, Jack Davis, and Nancy back together at a reception for Jack's retirement from the University of North Texas at the Sid Richardson Museum in Fort Worth, Texas.

Later, our programs changed to offer fellowships in arts leadership through different funders, but the heyday of NTIEVA was wonderfully exciting. All of us who worked there knew we were in a special place. We got to work with some of the best art educators in the country and formed lasting relationships with our colleagues. I believe I earned the privilege of becoming the editor of *SchoolArts* in large part because of my work with NTIEVA's website and newsletter.

Ten years ago, I left NTIEVA to return to elementary art teaching, also in Denton. After I retired from teaching public school last June, I was invited to become the interim director of NTIEVA, since Jack Davis was now retiring. So here I am, back in place, at least for now. I hope you, too, get to return to your special places and help your students find theirs. 🙄

Nancy Walker

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