



# A Fitting Celebration

Janet Payne

**W**hat do you do when two of your friends retire, each with thirty years of art teaching experience? Celebrate!

How could I create a fitting tribute? I decided to hold the celebration in a downtown Fredericksburg, Virginia, in an artist co-op called LibertyTown. With fabulous ceramics and paintings surrounding the common area, it was the perfect place for a party.

Each art teacher guest was asked to create an hors d'oeuvre or dessert with a well-known artist in mind. I asked that each art teacher write a "I remember when..." statement for

each honored art teacher. I purchased two special cups and had the teachers place their statements in each cup so that each retiree could take home her prized memories.

For party decorations we used colorful Mexican oilcloth to cover the tables and Oaxacan carved animals as centerpieces.

Representations of art through food ranged from Dali's Deli featuring a salmon mousse with a watch eye, to Robert Smithson's *Spiral Jetty* made with oatmeal cookies, and Wayne Thiebaud's *Cherries*. Other food offerings included Mondrian and Arthur Dove cookies, Frida Kahlo's salsa dip,

van Gogh's ears (mandarin orange slices in Jello shots), to Brancusi's *The Kiss* carved into a block of cheese. The champagne toast was followed by the cutting of the Mad Hatter's cake.

Generations of local art teachers gathered to pay tribute to the amazing careers of two of art education's finest. Congratulations to Wendy Harris and Nita Adams for over sixty years of teaching art in Stafford County Public Schools. 🙄

*Janet Payne has just retired from her job as the visual and performing arts coordinator for Stafford County Public Schools in Virginia. jpayne22401@yahoo.com.*

**WEB LINK**

[www.libertytownarts.com](http://www.libertytownarts.com)