

As I sit down at my computer to compose an acceptance speech for the 2014 NAEA Women's Caucus, Mary J. Rouse award. I wonder, where to begin? Who to thank?

"Let's start at the very beginning, a very good place to start." (SLIDE)

Memphis Tennessee: the youngest of 4, a little girl with thick dark, curly hair, who loves rummaging through her mom's button box, holding meetings of JUG , the "just us girls" club and making art. (SLIDE)

Oh, how I loved color, to make things, get art books and new art materials.

Or I could tell you about a 6th grade art project - an Egyptian sarcophagus

I made out of paper mache and spray-painted gold. I mummified my

Barbie doll by wrapping her in shreds of an old, tea-soaked fabric and sprinkled with beads, buttons, and pickling spices.

Or I could tell you about slumber parties at my best friend Cheryl's - to design our 18" x 24" scrapbook for our B'nai Brith Girls chapter that won regional, nationally and an international awards.

Or I could tell you about Mrs. Wilson, my high school art teacher, who dressed in monochromatic colors, wild patterns and textures. Oh, how she disturbed my adolescent design and color sensibilities!

Oh no, not the *The Sound of Music*, too trite.

Lyrics from the song, The Circle Game sung by Joni Mitchell pops into my head: "***We can't return we can only look behind, From where we came, And go round and round and round, In the circle game.***" Round and round, I go. NOW The words begin to flow.

Who to thank? Everyone! NAEA, The Board of Women's Caucus, the Award Committee, all the other nominees and award winners, the previous Rouse Awardees. Seeing my name added to the lineage of art educators who have shaped this field is an incredible tribute. I am humbled. And to all of you in the audience tonight, I thank you for your contributions to art education. (**SLIDE**)

My professors: Drs. Smith-Shank, Freedman, Boughton, Valance and Staikidis; My doctoral committee: Deb, Lee, Nina, Susie, My doctoral colleagues: Maria, Christine, David, and Lisa, Sandrine, Liz and Nan.

(**SLIDE**)

My family who fully supported me - Scott, my husband and my son Clayton, My parents and in-laws: Charlie and Esther, Bob and Katy. My sisters: Merrill and Patty and my niece Andrea, and my friends: Sue and Don.

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My Dean and Vice Dean - Robert Stroker and Hester Stinnett, my mentor at Tyler - Jo-Anna Moore; and my colleagues - Wendy, Pepon, Billy and *now* Kryssi.

I came to art education as a seasoned professional in art therapy - searching for something. After working for many years in a large hospital as a clinical art therapist and directing an art therapy program in a special education school in the St. Louis area, I moved with my family to northern Illinois. I started a private practice as an art therapist and began exhibiting/selling my art work - Contemporary Story Beads. Things were moving along. Then...

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I met Debbie my life changed! She told me about this amazing art education department at Northern Illinois University, encouraged me to apply to graduate school and enter the doctoral program, which I did. In no time, I was accepted and had a teaching assistantship. Coming from a therapeutic background, I wondered how I would negotiate the shift from art therapy to art education. I dove right in - became fully immersed. What I began to understand on this new path was that everything was connected.

Both fields could inform the other. Art is integral in my research practice and my teaching is part of my art practice. I could bridge multiple worlds.

More lyrics and messages "*come through*" (Dan Fogelberg's song, Part of the Plan):

"Be who you must that's a part of the plan, Await your arrival with simple survival, And one day we'll all understand."

I was able to infuse my therapeutic skills in my work. I found my creative voice in my tripartite identities as art therapist, art educator and artist/researcher, which are inextricably linked and essential for me to balance multiple realms and roles. I know no other way.

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As a Jewish, female artist/scholar my work continues to be inspired by Friedl Dicker-Brandeis, the Bauhaus-trained artist, renowned for her healing work teaching art with children in one of the most traumatic places imaginable - at the Terezin ghetto camp during WWII.

Receiving this award supports my previous research efforts with art education and students at-risk, challenges me to continue my work with adolescent girls with adverse childhood experiences, including traumatic

stress and involves the development of a thematic transformational art curriculum for art teachers (and therapists) who work with troubled students. My interest in narrative story telling-that encourages personal reflection, self knowledge, and healing in the context of making art - is evidenced in all that I do: my scholarly publications, my dedication to art education and art therapy, my own art work.

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It is truly an honor to receive the 2014 NAEA Women's Caucus, Mary J. Rouse award. Like Dorothy states as she wakes from a dream in the closing scene of The Wizard of Oz,

"There's no place like home." And I have found my home in Art Education.

THANK YOU all for being my companions on the journey.