

Larry Kantner's June King McFee Acceptance Speech

Images from a tin-washed copper
box.

I opened the large tin washed copper box containing the photographs that my mother, and before her, my grandmother, and before her, my great grandmother had named and lovingly saved for future generations. I saw a kaleidoscope of images, people that now define me both past, present and future. As images of myself merged with the others they form a pattern for my life. This is how my story begins, for here it exists in sepia and black and white and later tints and transparent colors. To know me, you must meet a few of them, to know them, I will have to tell you a story. As I moved from one photo to the next, the in-betweens seemed animated, and their stories merged with each other and overlapped with mine.

In 1836 my family arrived from Germany and settled in Ohio. A little over a hundred years later I was born. Mother was ill when I was very young, so my Grandma Stoll often cared of me.



She was a warm and kind person, the perfect grandmother. She looked like a grandmother. She had long hair that, when it was not in braids circling her head, would fall way below her waist. One of my favorite tasks was to comb her hair, next to swinging on the bars in her clothes closet like a miniature tarzan. As were most of the adults that surrounded me, she was very indulgent. My first collaboration was with her and coloring. I enjoyed coloring in the objects, but didn't like to color the large expanses of green grass and blue sky which I assigned to my grandmother.



A very special person in my life was my Great Aunt Linna. To me she was larger than life and in my memory remains so today. Aunt Linna was a very talented and gifted individual. She was the teacher, the care giver, the family historian and the artist. She eagerly embraced life. In 1897 she attended Ohio Normal University and she became a teacher at \$35.00 a month, of course, as was the requirement, she was a single woman at the time. In 1900 she was appointed to the Uinta Indian Reservation in Utah to teach in their boarding school. She taught the younger children and the principal taught the older ones. I can remember Aunt Linna's stories of the Sun Dance and life on the reservation. Among the things that she brought back with her was an Indian woman's dress and bead work, both the objects and the retelling of her stories, provided me my show and tell for many years. No guests were allowed on the reservation except by special permission. I often thought of her experience when I was in the Amazon with the Djuka Maroons and living in their village which took government approval. Perhaps a little of her spirit inspired and protected me on my journeys. We often visited Aunt Linna and Uncle Harvey at their farm in Marion Ohio. Here I am at their farm, a photo etching. I altered the figure and scene to create an image of a memory of my childhood, an echo of my past.

My father's parents, Grandpa and Grandma Kantner were also a large part of my life. I spent many night's sleeping on their horse hair couch, leaving early in the morning to go fishing with them. Their home smelled like Lava Soap and their basement had the acidic smell of vinegar in large wooden barrels. I

loved to listen to my grandmother tell me stories of her childhood. She didn't speak English until she was in the 8th grade being raised in an all German community in Ohio. One of her treasures was the Heilige Schrift, the huge old family German Bible. During World War I, when Sauerkraut became Liberty Cabbage and there were book burnings of anything in German, Grandma hid her ancient Bible in the attic. When I was a teenager, she gave the Bible to me, much to the surprise of the rest of the family. I became fascinated with the idea that there were people in the world who were able to speak and write in other languages.

Both my parents were raised on farms, but my mother's parents lost their farm and were forced to move to a small house on the edge of Wapakoneta, Ohio. My parents were married during the depression and suffered like the majority in the country. They moved in with my grandparents. Food was always plentiful for we had three large truck patches, we made our own laundry soap, and much to my consternation, our own catsup. I made such a fuss about having to use home made catsup that they finally gave in and bought me my own bottle of store bought. I seemed to be sick with the array of childhood diseases, twice with pneumonia, and once by opening the backdoor of the car while it was moving, and falling out. I still have little bare spots hidden under my hair. Reata Kock became my nurse and siter during these times. Reata had a great desire to go to Alaska and she would entertain me with tales of the north. Perhaps it was to cool my fever. At any rate, once again my interest in traveling was stimulated. When I was 8, I made this drawing of my concept of Alaska.



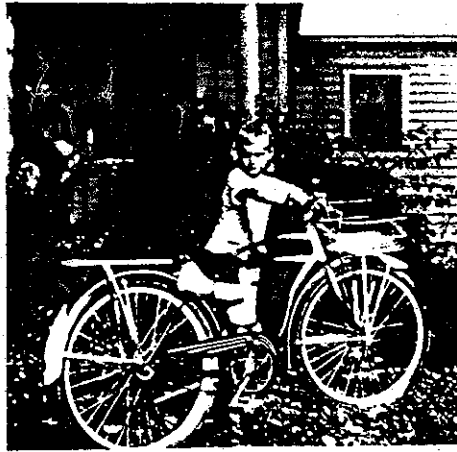
My mother was very talented, and played the piano and cello. She briefly went to Chicago to study piano, but fell in love with my father and they were married which ended her musical career. Mother, however, continued to play the piano and organ at our church for many years. When mother was old, she had stroke which left her unable to read music, but she could still sit at the piano and play any piece that remained in her memory. Mother kept a daily dairy on me for about a four year period. Now if I feel sad or a little lonely, I read from these passages and my spirits are renewed. It's good to remember that one was loved very much as a child. One day an itinerant photographer showed up at the house with a goat and a cart with stars on it. Later this image became the subject of one of my first photointaglios. Always on the move, always ready to go.

My father was a honest and hard worker. In the difficult times he did his best to provide for his family by holding down both day and night jobs. We had a car, but he would ride his bike to work each day. Although I didn't realize it at the time, my father had the making of an artist. Like a child carrying in his pockets his valued bits and pieces of his world he loved, enjoyed, or just picked to saved, (much to my mothers chagrin), dad would bring home treasures he found in other peoples cast a ways, bought at auction or traded for. Dad would return home with a smile and a look of great anticipation. We never knew when something would appear, be it the bird bath made out of a bathroom lavatory in the center of the back yard, or the large stainedglass window hanging on the back of our garage. He had one room in the basement that was his, where he would keep his treasures and arrange his objects. In the summer the basement was cool and he found comfort in being there surrounded by his treasures. He didn't consider himself an artist, I don't think it would have ever crossed his mind, but now, many years later, I do.

As a young child, I was surrounded by loving older adults, I was blessed with additional aunts and uncles and grandparents, not related by blood. There was Uncle Grover and Aunt Nettie, Grandma Lusk and Hazel, our neighbors on Auglaize Street. Even as a very young child I knew them as my extended family. With diaper bag in hand, I would

toddle off to see them. They patiently put up with me, even when I pulled off all the peony buds in Grandma Lusk's flower garden. They taught me color discrimination. Every Easter, this little group of caring older adults would color and hide Easter Eggs in our yard just for me. Then like a little prince, with the troops following behind me, I would search for the eggs. However, you didn't want to find a black egg. They would gleefully direct me to look where a black one would be hidden. No matter how hard they would try, I was unable to locate the black eggs and filled my basket with the colored ones. Mother noted in her dairy that some of my real aunts felt I was being spoiled. They were probably right.

One of my great wishes was to own a big bike. I begged and pleaded with my parents to buy me one, but they knew I was too small for a regular size bike. However, one Christmas, I was sure that I would be getting one, I didn't sleep most of the night and the next morning, much to my delight, when I went downstairs, there was my big bike.



But my parents were right, I couldn't sit on the seat and reach the peddles at the same time. After some thought my dad resolved the problem, he removed the seat, tied a old velvet pillow on the stem and attached wooded blocks to the peddles. Strange as it might have looked, I mastered the big bike and rode, a little wobbly, but with great pride It is my first memory of being an over achiever, which lead me later to holding a joint appointment in two departments, in two different colleges, with two chairs and two deans and two sets of different professional expectations.

Elementary school was great. One day, early in the school year my fourth grade teacher, Mrs. Wolfe,

started class by giving each of us an envelope that contained a photograph and the address of a fourth grader living in Germany. Needless to say everyone was excited by the possibilities of having a pen-pal. My first international dialogue began.

The name on the back of the photograph I received was Karl Blechinger. Karl was from a small farming community in Germany, called Mittertich near the German Czechoslovakian boarder. That afternoon I hurried home and started to compose my first letter to Karl. I told him about myself, my family, school and living in a small farming town in Ohio including all the things that are very important to a fourth grader, in probably a page and a half. I mailed the letter and then for a number of weeks checked the mail box daily for a letter from Karl. At last one day I reached into the box and there was a blue envelope with a strange stamp addressed to me. As a fourth grader I received little mail, so this was a very special day. I rushed home to read my letter from this new friend from another country. A contact from across the ocean, from a country that my family came from. I couldn't wait to tell my Grandma Kantner, the keeper of the old German Bible, who expressed great delight with her usual *Mien Gott im Himmel* Larry, how wonderful.

When I was eight years old, a miracle happened in our family, mother had one miscarriage, and it looked as if she would not be able to bear another child; however, much to our delight my sister, Rebecca, was born. My first memory of Rebecca was when mother came home from the hospital, with her in a white bassinet with pink ribbon trim. In front of my aunts, uncles and cousins, and much to their horror, and without notice or permission, I rushed over and picked her up. I was, and still am, such a proud big bother. Over the years we have grown closer, we talk to each other once or twice a week, and we are best friends. Her family has grown to include, Nathan, John, Julie, Kim, Brandon, and most recently, grand niece Elizabeth.

Junior High was tolerable, and High School I lived through. My best friends were my books, my art, and my imagination. College was different, although at first I didn't want to go. I thought that it would be just an extension of high school, but my

family was adamant. In 1956 I entered Otterbein College a small liberal arts college in Ohio. I was the only art major in my class. I loved college. I found that having some artistic talents was an asset. I soon was drawing large caricatures of my new friends on their dormitory walls which when discovered by the counselor, had to be removed. My professors were Mr. Hauseflugh and Mrs. Frank, and what I really remember is how they opened up their homes. I thought all faculty had Sunday afternoon teas for their students.

One of my fraternity bothers, Will Smith, was an African American, one of the very few on campus. The college prided itself in being one of the first colleges in Ohio to admit blacks. However, only a very small number and only the brightest and best. Will was a very talented organist and a fine person and good friend. I still remember the day that the fraternity was planning a dinner party, and the restaurant informed us that if we were the fraternity that had a Negro member, he would not be welcome. The brothers, without discussion canceled the reservation. I remember that evening sitting in my room distressed and frustrated and not really comprehending. After talking to Will, I realized that I would never truly understand what it was like to be black in a white community.

Years later I went to Surinam, and with the exception of Janina, everyone was black. I soon lost my sense of my whiteness, until we attended a large community counsel meeting. We quietly sat together on the last row of benches in the back of the meeting space. One of the visiting gramans, pointed at the two of us, and shouted in Djuka Tonga, who are those two white people and what are they doing here? I was embarrassed at being white and felt a sinking feeling of intruding and not belonging.

After graduating from college with my teaching certificate I began my career teaching Junior High in Tiffin, Ohio. Needless to say it was a challenge, at one school I taught my art class in two room across the hall from each other simultaneously. I needed a pair of roller skates to move back and forth.

That summer I was asked to join a group sponsored by the college to go to Europe for the summer and live with families. This was my first real opportunity to travel, I saved all

the money I could that year. I was earning \$4,200 a year and paying \$5.00 a week rent for a single room. Europe was grand, I met the most interesting people, lived in their homes, saw sights and art work that I had only seen in books and magazines. I also had an opportunity to go to Mittertich and visit Karl for the first time after all the years of writing to each other.

The most memorable moment was our visiting together the site of a concentration camp on the German/Czechoslovakian border. We stood there in what was now a memorial garden with green grass, neatly manicured around the remains of the furnaces. I couldn't help but think that if we were but a few years older, we might have met as enemies not as friends. Later, the memory of the visit prompted me to create this etching, "Shrouded in velvet darkness, the smoking chimneys of the crematorium spew forth their secret of genocide, the night factory".

My second year of teaching I asked to go to an art education conference, my first NAEA Western Regional Convention held in Cincinnati and I actually saw, at a distance, Ed Mattill and June King McFee. It was there that I inquired about graduate school. I had decided that I would go either into the Peace Corps or to graduate school. The graduate school applications came first and I decided to go to Penn State. They had the shortest application form and I took that to be a good omen. Graduate school was wonderful, the people were wonderful, the classes were wonderful, it was a wonderful time.

I spent several years at Penn State, earning my master's and then my doctorate. This was a great time to be in art education. I was in the world of Victor Lowenfeld, where process was more important than product, and creativity reigned. So many fine scholars and artists passed through the program during those years. The camaraderie of the graduate students was very special.

This is photo of the members of the PSU Art Education Graduate Club. Together Marilyn, BJ, Tom, and Clem were my close group and that year I created a large painting called: "The Group." I met Elizabeth, formerly known as BJ, Sacca when she was an undergraduate art education major and we worked together on a research project for Leon Frankston. We enjoyed research, we were fascinated with the computer, and we spent hours talking and planning. I can still see us sitting on the steps of the library and my saying, to both BJ and myself, "BJ we have to focus, focus." We tended to talk a lot, read a lot, reflect a lot, and do a lot. One of our more interesting projects never actually happened but we had great fun planning it together. We were invited by Dale Harris (of the Goodenough draw-a-man test fame), who had been a good friend to Lowenfeld, to accompany him to the high Andes in Peru to assist with his research and at the same time conduct our own study. Due to some health problems he was unable to head the team so we put the study together. Unfortunately, try as we might, we were unable to get the necessary funding, but it did keep us busy and intellectually stimulated for a long time.



My mentor, teacher, and advisor was Dr. Kenneth Beittel. I had the opportunity to work as his research assistant. He is a very kind and generous man. He had great patience and always saw the potential in his students. He could always show interest in what his students were interested in, he often saw far beyond the scope of what they were thinking. You would leave talking with Dr. Beittel a little exhausted and sensing your mind expanded and trying, with luck, to hold on to every word that he said to you. One needed a decompression period after such an encounter with him and attempted not to shake your head for fear of his thoughts becoming jumbled or leaving you. By his example, I realized that one could be both an educator and an artist. Little did I realize how difficult balancing the two would be, but if there is a passion, with a little tenacity, one can do it.

My first position was at Indiana University. I had the opportunity to work with Guy Hubbard, Mary Rouse and Jessie Lavono-Kerr. I was only 27 and most of the graduate students that I worked with were my age or older. I remember at the end of the semester, after the last class, taking my students to a bar to celebrate. I was the only one carded. We had a great group of doctoral students, including Bob Anorld, Francis Andeson, Carmen Armstrong and Sandy Packer. At that time, two of my young undergraduate student were Debbie Smith Shank and Bob Sabol.

The summer before going to Missouri, I received a call from a woman at USAID who inquired if I would be interested in going to Nepal to teach. I thought she said DePauw, and since I was scheduled to teach at IU, my response was no. She asked me if I knew where Nepal was and I should think about it and she would call me the next day. I remember going into Guy's office and telling him what she had offered me, his immediate response was "go, this is a great opportunity." Of course the next day when she called back, I accepted the position in the Teach Corps.

During the summers of 1971 and 1972, I was a member of the Overseas Teach Corps in Nepal. The first summer I was assigned to conduct an in-service creative arts workshop at Parapakar High School in Katmandu. During the afternoons, I decided to

visit each one of my students at their school. The government provided me a driver and a jeep and off we would go. Some taught in city schools, others in rural school which were lean-tos for the students to sit under and the teacher would stand outside holding an umbrella in the sun and rain. The teachers were warm and gracious. I would visit the classrooms; often there would be a student assembly or art show and always tiffin, afternoon refreshments, usually tea and a hard boiled egg. I become an expert at telling "Goldilock and Three Bears" and answering their questions. On one occasion, I was asked to sing a song! I was so surprised that the only one that came to mind was "Home on the Range." I managed to sing the best I could the whole song. At each school one could sense the pride and oneness felt by the teachers and students in their school.

We ended the workshop with a picnic, a graduation ceremony, and an exhibit of their work. I planned to give each student a small gift at graduation and asked to be taken to a shop where I could buy white wrapping paper which I thought would be very appropriate for a graduation gift. As politely as he could, Chakra informed me that white was use for mourning the dead, not to be used to wrap a gift. We choose bright red and orange tissue paper instead. I was learning that what one may believe is true in one culture may not be true in another.

I spent most of my free time in Nepal with the Nepalese. Nepal is a fascinating country. A year before I arrived, they had introduced electricity to the city. One family that I came to know very well was the Chicarcyhar's living in Bhaktapur near the birth place of Buddha. Their home became my home in Nepal.



On my last evening with them, the father took me down stairs to the front door and removed the old antique lock from the door and gave it to me. Nothing needed to be explained, my personal space extended and now embraced this spot in Nepal. This experience clinched my interest in the international aspects of art education. During this time I was attending the annual NAEA international meetings chaired by Al Hurwitz.

Al personifies the international art educator and has been my mentor and friend for a long time. In 1973 I attended my first INSEA congress in Budapest. It was an exciting and mind expanding experience. Having the opportunity to interact and share with colleagues around the world set the stage for my involvement in international art education. It also gave me a new connection with my friends and colleagues, the likes of Ken Marnatz, Phyllis Gold-Gluck, Mary Perkins, Elliot Eisner, Maryl DeJong, Sharon House, AnaMae Barbaso, Mary Stokrocki, Kathy Desmond, Enid Zimmerman, and Gil Clark to name a few.

In 1974, I prepared a USA Children's Exhibition for the INSEA congress in Novi Sad, Yugoslavia. Al, an INSEA World Councilor, was unable to go to the congress and asked me to represent him at the world council meeting. I was hooked, and became very involved with INSEA and later USSEA. During the USSEA executive council meeting in April of 1981, I proposed that USSEA establish a research journal. My good friend Enid Zimmerman, the whirling dervish of art education, later commented to me: Do you have any idea how much work starting a journal will be? Of course, I didn't. If I had I might not have taken on the task. Through this publication, USSEA sought to confirm it's cultural and social commitment to a greater understanding of diverse cultures and the role of art in multicultural and cross-cultural education. Only through the dedicated work of my editorial associates, my doctoral students, Susan Hood, June Eyestone, and Candace Stout was the journal possible. We ran a mom and pop cottage industry to bring the journal to life. A little room off my office in Townsend Hall became the editorial headquarters, and a large tracking

chart of manuscripts in review decorated the wall.

I went to Missouri in 1971 and spent the rest of my professional career at MU. There were two major reasons for going to MU, one was to work with Marilyn and the second was to have an appointment in both education and fine arts. This dual appointment provided me the opportunity to teach my two favorite subjects, art and art education working both with the beginning art and art education majors and the masters and doctoral students in art education.

It was a happy time for both of us. We changed spaces and pit fired ceramics. We taught our classes, prepared papers and presentations. We were friends, colleagues and kindred spirits. Marilyn received the McFee award in 1990. After Marilyn's untimely death, I became a surrogate, an uncle if you will, to a few of her Iowa graduate students whose careers I still follow with great interest. She was one of the good people in art education and is sorely missed.

Together we began a journal in which we attempted to document accounts of some experiences we had with school children, university students, and families as we search for meaning through events we called art. The pit firings were key. It was an experience with clay and with improvised firing techniques exemplifying a total experience in art, using materials from one's own environment. Two of the many students that participated were Margaret and Larry Peeno. With the sixth graders at Midway Heights Elementary School we gathered, cleaned, spun, and wove using our natural dyed wool. We did this at a little school where Cyndy Colbert was the art teacher.

It was during this time that I had the good fortune to meet Janina Rubinowitz. Janina was active in USSEA and gave a number of presentations on her experiences in Surinam. After each presentation I would talk to her and she would invite me to go with her. Finally in the summer of 1981 I decided to go. The island village was named Drietabbetje which is located on the Tapanahony River. It was an unbelievable journey. During my stay I spent much of my time observing the children at school and play, and collecting their drawings.

On one afternoon I noticed that a number of the children congregating in an open area of the village. At first I thought they were merely playing in the sand, however as I approached it became apparent that they were busy involved in a communal effort of sorts. They were concentrating their efforts to build a sand island village with rivers and huts. A few of the children had brought their small wooden carved canoes with little carved gas motors. The children had tied a cord to the front of their boats and were pulling them in sand rivers. As the village emerged, there was much discussion and reflection on both the placement, construction, and use of the sand village, a transcendence of intentions.

My research primarily addressed issues related to children's aesthetic development and often focused on multi-cultural and cross-cultural art education concerns. Having the opportunity to teach and visit a number of countries put me in contact with art educators around the world. These contacts provided Connie Newton and me the opportunity to develop a number of experimental aesthetic studies which examine the cross-cultural developmental changes in children's aesthetic responses. In the past I have collaborated with a number of my former and current graduate students, most recently Kathy Unrath. Together we have conducted research, given national and international presentations, and published our research. This would not have been possible without a mutual respect that was developed during their student days.

In 1968, Carlos Castaneda wrote *The Teachings of Don Juan*. Castaneda was an anthropology student at the University of California, and had been studying the medical plants used by the Indians in the Southwest. On one of his trips to the southwest, he met an old white haired Yaqui Indian medicine man named, Don Juan. Don Juan agreed to take Castaneda on as his apprentice. One day they were sitting on Don Juan's porch and he explained to Castaneda the importance for finding one's spot.

Castaneda, assuming that it would be near Don Juan, moved closer to him, at which Don Juan informed him, this was his spot--Castaneda would have to find his own spot. Castaneda inquired, How would he

know when he found his spot? Don Juan answered, When you find your spot you will know. It is where one can feel happy and strong.

In searching for my spot, I was guided by the likes of Martin Buber, who taught me the need for meaningful dialogue; Rollo May, who reminded me of the courage required to create; John Dewey, who convinced me of the importance of education and art; Ken Beittel who valued his students and his pots; Mary Caroline Richards who helped me find my center; Victor Lowenfeld who saw potential in all children and loved their creativity; R.D. Laing, who introduced me to mysteries of experience, June King McFee who articulated the role of culture and the environment, and Anne Dillard who encouraged me to look closely. A host of fine teachers, colleagues, and students, all contributed to my finding my spot: Teaching.

Teaching is not only a science, it is an art. I believe that art is made from the materials of our own life, not because those materials are the most expedient, but because these are the things to which a person gives meaning. The artistry of teaching provides the process and materials for effective student-teacher dialogues which are indispensable in the search for personal meaning. My goal as a teacher is to motivate and challenge my students to discover, within themselves, the passion, abilities, and means to enjoy and give purpose to their lives

Receiving this award is an affirmation of my decision, my spot, and for that I want to thank the selection committee and the members of the Woman's Caucus. A special thank you to my students, many who gave up their Saturday night in New York City to be here tonight. They are the essence of my teaching; they are what make the difference and bring out the best in me; they are the major centering force that identifies me as a teacher, researcher, and artist. I am the mentored mentor.

As of September 1, 2000 I officially retired. Some have suggested that I have not quite understood the concept of retirement since I continued to teach, advise, and attend professional conferences. However, I'm looking forward to traveling with Carl Morris, my companion for the past 27 years, to exotic places; to someday complete my studio at home,

which is now in it's 18th month; and to continue to treasure the images from the tin washed copper box.

To quote Don Juan: "For me there is only the traveling on paths that have heart, on any path that may have heart, there I travel, and the only worth while challenge is to traverse its full length, and there I travel, looking and looking, breathlessly".



Many years ago I was in an elementary school play. I was in what might be called the chorus, I played a star along with many of classmates who were also stars. Together my mother and I made my costume, I wore a large card board star covered with aluminum foil on my head and a pair of light blue pajamas covered with stars. I was very proud of my outfit and my role, I knew that I was only one of many stars, but that I evening I felt very special. Tonight, for this moment, you have made me feel like that star again . . . and for that I thank you.

Castaneda, Carlos. (1968). *The Teachings of Don Juan*. New York, New York: Washington Square Press
Notes: This paper was accompanied with slides. I have included a few photos in this publication, however, not all were included. The text may indicate an image when there is none.
Dr. Larry A. Kantner
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MEMBERSHIP DIRECTORY

At the 2001 meeting, the WC voted to have a membership directory printed or inserted into a future issue of The Report. Membership director Sheri Klein and member Kathy Connors volunteered to coordinate the directory that would list names, mailing addresses, emails, and whether members would consider being mentors for other students or professionals.

It was agreed that the WC would put the following form in The Report to call for mentors and to request current preferred information for the directory in case members have changes or did not wish to have their Membership List name, address, phone, and/or email given. Sheri Klein has names, addresses, phones, and emails that you gave when you last joined or renewed. That information will be used in the directory unless you make changes below. If you wish to give a partial listing, fill out the form and write "do not list" in the blank for the item you do not want listed. If you have a question, email Sheri Klein at: kleins@wwstout.edu.

CURRENT MEMBERSHIP DIRECTORY LISTING

IF YOU WISH TO BE LISTED AS A MENTOR, IF YOU HAVE CHANGES OR PREFERRED CONTACT INFORMATION, OR IF YOU DO NOT WISH TO HAVE YOUR NAME, ADDRESS, EMAIL, OR PHONE NUMBER PRINTED IN THE DIRECTORY, PLEASE FILL OUT THIS FORM AND MAIL to:

Dr. Sheri Klein
1816 1/2 10th St. E
Menomnie, WI 54751

email (kleins@wwstout.edu)

I do not wish to be listed in the directory.

I would like to be listed as a mentor in the directory.

My current preferred listing for the directory should be:

Name _____

Preferred Current Mailing Address:

Preferred Current Phone:

email:
