

For now, I will take the time to feel grateful to you for honoring me with this award. I will bask in this moment. I am working on balance in my life.

**Author's note:**

I want to thank Renee Sandell for asking the audience during the 1997 WCA awards presentation to envision a person to nominate for this year. Kathleen Desmond envisioned me and I am forever indebted to her for following through with her nomination of me. My gratitude goes also to Martha Taunton, Larry Kanter, Rebecca Brooks, Sam Compton, and Jessie Lovano-Kerr who wrote letters on my behalf to the nominations committee and to Carmen Armstrong and her committee for selecting me as the 1998 recipient of the June King McFee Award. I am proud to receive this award and honored that it carries the name of June King McFee.

**References:**

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*Karen L. Carroll  
Mary J. Rouse Award  
Acceptance Speech  
1998*

I am immensely honored to receive this award from the Women's Caucus. I am most grateful to Renee Sandell who envisioned this and who I envision here with me tonight. She has a front row seat in my mind. I am also humbled by the kind words Georgia Collins, Christy Parks, and Jan Olson offered on my behalf. It is indeed humbling to look over my shoulder at the awardees who have preceded me and I see before me an audience of potential nominees.

I found Doug Blandy's acceptance speech from last year's award a good model and I would like to follow his example by sharing some of the beliefs and values that have shaped my journey in art education. Along the way, I would like to mention those who have contributed to my evolution as a person and as a professional. The three values I would like to talk about are: Community, Transformation, and Seeing the Forest for the Trees.

**Community**

I came across a notion in sociology when I was trying to argue the formation of special programs for the gifted in art. Simply put, the idea was that we come to know who we are within the context of community. Certainly, the profession of teaching art, national and state organizations, the Women's Caucus, and our own places of teaching provides us with "communities" in which we come to know ourselves and each other better. Perhaps like many of you, I held some intuitive notions about what I liked when I was young but who I have become has been shaped in large part by others, what they saw in me that

I could not see, what they let me try my hand at, and how they supported me in the process.

Part of my artist identity was formed in the community found in the art room and the yearbook office in my high school in Cheektowaga, New York and I owe a great deal to three art teachers who redirected my life from a path into nursing to a path into teaching art. Still others have contributed to my artist identity: I carry fond memories of being mentored by photographer Oscar Bailey and printmaker Frank Eckmier at Buffalo State. All helped me discover the value art-making has as a process for coming to know more about what I think and feel.

Another part of my identity, having to do with counseling and personnel, was shaped in undergraduate and graduate school, especially by a number of women who trusted me and gave me responsibilities under the Dean of Women's Staff at Penn State. Here I learned some useful lessons like how to throw football players out of the dorm lobby at midnight and, more so, about the need students have to process their journeys in search for identity. I am indebted to Dorothy Harris, Dean of Women, and several others from her staff who nurtured and guided development in student personnel, a career path I almost pursued.

My decision to stay in art education is due in part to Ed Mattill, who opened the art education door to me at Penn State, and to the wonderful supportive mentoring of Alice Schwartz. Today, I am still using the lessons she taught me about doing research in the classroom, and of course, she got me interested in television and since then I have been using video as a tool for teaching and reflection.

I also benefited from a powerful experience working in a small

historically Black college, learning what it felt like to be a "minority" in a community. Others created new communities, as did Ruth Denney with her brand new Houston High School for the Performing and Visual Arts, in which I was to learn more about who I was and who I wanted to become. It was within this community that I fell in love with curriculum development and began my work with the gifted in art. Tonight, I am ever so pleased to have Brian Sikes in the audience. Brian was one of the first students we interviewed and accepted for the new Houston High School and he and his wife Bibiana are both Chicago artists and teachers. They and my godson Noah are family to me, and example of the special gift that teaching brings when the community you create is life-long.

Ann Vermel, the Director of the Arts Council in Rhode Island took a chance on me, giving me the opportunity to take the lead with a new state high school for the gifted and talented in the arts. While we survived for a couple of years on soft money, I was able to learn more under her guidance: how to take on school boards, state department of education folks, and legislators. Later, it was Superintendent Jerome Jones who gave me the opportunity to try my hand at supervising all the arts for a city school district, David Baker who gave me good counsel and superb mentoring, and most recently, Fred Lazarus who provided a unique community of artists and art educators within which to further test myself. In each of these situations, someone has held out an opportunity, provided the conditions which supported creative work, and guided me along the way.

I have had wonderful company on this journey. My companions from Teachers College, Jan Olson and Sandy Kay, have both been inspirational friends. Jan's interest in story and narrative

drawing not only provided clear goals and developmentally appropriate strategies for teaching but helped me "see into" the early work of Edvard Munch. Sandy and I have shared a commitment to gifted education and her notions about what constitutes elegant problem solving has been fully woven into the programs at MICA. Judy Simpson created an opportunity to engage a group in the development of a new textbook which found the shape it needed to be through a truly collaborative process. The book includes Jan, Sandy, Marianne Kerlavage, Cheryl Hamilton, and Jean Delaney. With others in Maryland, including Barry Shauck, Joyce Bucci, Daisy McTighe, Jay Tucker, and many others, I have found companionship and mutual caring a bonus in our shared efforts to strengthen the position of the arts in the schools. Karen Hamblen, Sharon La Pierre, Enid Zimmerman, and Mary Ann Stankiewicz have been supportive in another way, helping me write and publish, a process that clearly benefits from the input of community.

In my current role as a teacher of teachers, I am looking for the heart and artistic soul that can be nurtured with the right conditions, opportunities, challenges and guidance. In an article with Renee, we once commented that it takes a whole community to produce a new generation of teachers. I am very fortunate to be a part of a very special community at the Maryland Institute, joined by Renee, whose every endeavor is marked by quality and thoughtfulness, Henry Jones whose attention to detail is balanced with a generosity and vision, Joan Gaither who keeps us on our toes alert to any form of stereotypical thinking, and of course, Al Hurwitz, a most gifted mentor and friend who has made a life's mission out of connecting people from different communities

all over the world. Our mutual hope is to create the kind of community for students in which collaboration, coupled with individual attention, yields a sense of family and life long friendships as well as a sense of professional commitment to shared beliefs and values. It is a special treat to have two of my former students here tonight, Jenny Siegenthaler and Katie Morris.

## Transformation

Transformation. The very word makes me think of Peter London and Judy Burton whom I consider to be inspirational colleagues. Judy's wonderful phrase identifies the very essence of art as an "act of transformation." Art-making, teaching, and administration have all been transforming experiences for me. I have learned that qualitative changes take a long time and that quality is a most fragile construct, supported by the exquisite care of individuals lovingly attending to something they believe and cherish. Mediocrity, by comparison, is far more stable and enduring. I have learned that hidden agendas are often at work, that institutions cannot care, and that it is individual people who make a difference. These lessons have lead me to my present position at MICA. I have always loved small institutions where creative change is expected and encouraged. I also see that the most dynamic point of entry for change in the educational system is the individual teacher and I am committed to preparing the best teachers possible and for providing teachers opportunities for continued growth and development. The power of a single teacher is not to be underestimated if they are well grounded advocates for art education.

I see my role now as one of providing the conditions for the transformation of others: for the

transition from artist to the one who guides the art encounters of others, for the transition from student to teacher, for the transition of teacher to artist again, and for the transition from master teacher to college art educator, helping special teachers like Joan Gaither, Sharon Johnson, and Kathy Unrath see themselves in new roles.

At the Maryland Institute, we use the metaphor of a bridge with our students. We tell students that they are about to embark on a journey starting on one side of the bridge. At the beginning, they are likely to be self-conscious and to be concerned about how they are performing. Their job is to cross the bridge to the other side, where their primary concerns are no longer with themselves but with their students, how students are performing, what they are learning, what they have to say.

Most student teachers believe that the biggest challenge they'll face is to learn how to teach and manage behavior in the classroom. Yet we've discovered that there are other dimensions of this journey that present transformational challenges. Student teachers all have their own dragons to slay. Some have discovered that they are ADD in the middle of student teaching or that their old strategies for communicating and problem solving simply do not work well enough and need to be rewritten. It is interesting to me that we still have many feminist issues here: knowing how to be proactive on one's own account, taking responsibility instead of blaming, effectively communicating one's needs, knowing how to negotiate and partner—and both women and men are challenged by them. Recent experience suggests that even school systems will take advantage of novice teachers when they can. It seems to me as I look at our student teachers, clearly half the transformation during student teaching is not

about learning to teach but rather about learning how to take care of themselves and be proactive on their own account.

I continue to believe in the transformational value of making art. It is not possible to take just part of one's self into the studio. The whole person must submit to the process and it is the whole person—fears, survival strategies, beliefs and all—that will be tested. I have been witness to the profoundly personal growth experienced by career teachers who have willingly put themselves back in the studio. Facing all their fears, the growth they have experienced is not just artistic, it is holistic. I see deeply moving examples every year as MFA candidates near the point where a body of work is cohering—and is starting to talk back to them. Facing this challenge, and working through it as they come to "find home and recognize it for the first time," has been empowering for teachers and thrilling to witness. The growth they experience then comes back to their students, often in subtle yet qualitative changes in their teaching.

As for myself, I kept my hand in photography all the years I taught and supervised in the public school and I think it was my salvation. It gave my life a balance and allowed me to hear a voice from deep inside myself. I had gotten away from my photography for about a decade with all the research and writing that comes with the dissertation. Yet, I fell in love with photography again on my sabbatical journey a couple of years ago, traveling alone for the better part of three months in Europe. Both writing and photography gave me wonderfully reflective tools to help me process a host of experiences. And I was reminded what a gift it is to love art, how art can shape a journey, give it substance, bring a new place to

life. I do not think I could have chosen a better career and am moved that so many others have played significant roles in mentoring me along the way.

### Seeing the Forest for the Trees

So what does throwing football players out of dorms have to do with a life in art education? Frankly, I had not given it much thought until I began to write this talk. Yet, now I am moved to make some kind of sense out of it. Along the way, I must have developed some skills that were useful in working with others, trying to get them to gently and positively see what I had in mind. As I recall, the football players did actually leave when this rather short person respectfully asked them to do so. But I think I was warming up for conversations of a much tougher kind—conversations with those who make decisions about art in the schools.

I have been well served by a kind of journey that has allowed me to see the profession from different vantage points. I know how it looks to a teacher, a department head, a supervisor, a program director, a college instructor, and a graduate director. Each time I shifted to a new level, the landscape changed and I saw more of how others think (and do not think) about art education. I've learned it is important to understand how and why others hold different points of view. I have found it useful to anticipate what others need to know or feel in order to open their thinking to new ideas. So many times, it is more simple than we believe. Only recently I had the opportunity to address a state board of education, talking about mark-making, tadpole people, early schema, and so forth. It unlocked a flood of "grandparent" stories and a previously unarticulated appreciation of drawing as a basic skill and concerns about how general education teachers were prepared

in art. I am reminded almost daily how little our colleagues in education really know about what we do, how children come to draw, and how art serves the total child. And I also know that just the right information can open their eyes.

Some of you know my interest in paradigms. Paradigm analysis has been a very enlightening process for me. It has made me look at the details and to consider the relationship between the parts and the whole. In an era of writing standards and indicators, I sense the focus on the smallest parts may distract us from keeping the whole picture before our eyes. I hope that we will take the time and, if necessary, even resist the pressure to move so quickly on reforms and initiatives as to not look at the whole the pieces-parts make. For example, I am concerned that our standards say nothing about teaching students to draw and that too often art is made to understand what artists do, not to hear one's own voice. There is one issue that seems to stand out for me in education today, an issue which reflects truly feminist values. It is the need to honor the voices of our students, to give them art as a vehicle for thought and expression, and for us to really listen to what they are saying.

We also need to listen carefully to what others are saying. The forces outside our profession, the media as well as critics of education and especially the critics of teacher preparation, would like to see us divided from within. There is a "one size fits all" mentality out there trying to establish some order in a world which seems quite out of control. I hope we have the wisdom to keep our eyes on the big picture and to find those central paths where students will understand not only what artists do but what they themselves can discover and say by engaging with artful processes of making.

In closing, I have benefited enormously from the nurturing energy of many good women and men. I am proud to be a member of this community, aware that "acts of transformations" are what we should be facilitating. Fortunately, we have art to remind us to look for the relationships between the parts and the whole so that we can see the message, hear the voice, and find the meaning. Thank you again for this honor and this opportunity to share my thoughts with you.

*Renee Sandell  
June King McFee Award  
Acceptance Speech  
1999*

Dear Women's Caucus Members:

As is customary, Women's Caucus Award winners' speeches are printed in *The Report*. While struggling to write up notes from my McFee remarks, Christy Park kindly reminded me that that event was a "moment, not a speech." To those of you who were there to witness my acceptance, I thank you for being part of that special evening. In writing this letter, I can only share some reflections from that bright moment of pride and joy that briefly lured me from an ominous battleground of cancer. Both then and now, I greatly appreciate the opportunity to reflect on personal and professional presence, spiritual journey and the healing power of ritual.

As I remember the evening, it was graced with the presence of so many special people. In addition to old and new NAEA Women's Caucus members, it included current and former students, my son David and his friend Matt, dear local friends Angela, Sylven, Suzy and Joe, as well as colleagues from the

Maryland Institute, College of Art, and NAEA. Instead of reading a prepared speech, I presented some remarks with a set of rough notes, given the emotional nature of what I had to share. I began by focusing on the nature of presence (so embodied in the ideal of feminist pedagogy) as being fully there and knowing one's self. Noting Pearl Greenberg's temporary absence at the conference due to her accident, I reflected on the recent loss of Marylou Kuhn, an inspiring mentor. I continue to miss her strong presence resonated with her direct eye contact and careful enunciation of her words and that warm, generous smile. She, like June King McFee, Laura Chapman and others, had the special kind of presence that shows caring about the audience to whom she speaks. Acknowledging the presence of the new generation of art educators, I congratulated my own students who had presented at this convention with great grace, clarity and style.

Having addressed the intertwining relationship of personal, professional and political dimensions of my life in my autobiographical Rouse Award Speech (1994), I chose to share fragments of my recent life story. I disclosed highlights of a difficult year focused on my economist husband Steve's valiant battle with Non-Hodgkins Lymphoma. My presence at the conference meant flying in from Boston, where I had recently relocated in search for a cure: Steve had just undergone a bone marrow transplant from an unrelated matched donor. His mom was caring for him in the hospital while I was at the conference, only several miles from our Bethesda home.

Unlike any other event or life experience, living with cancer has enlarged my spiritual journey. Furthermore, being an art educator has prepared me for coping and surviving both fear and disease.