

The Art of the Matter: Pat Harrison Gives Students Space to Create



Art has always interested Pat Harrison, a New Albany real estate agent and broker. Raised in Louisville, she was within walking distance of the Speed Art Museum. It became a frequent destination, and she enjoyed roaming the galleries, captivated in particular by paintings created by the classical masters. A decade later, a college art appreciation class taught her about a wide variety of artists,

their techniques and their work. She gained appreciation for many different types of art. "I still have my book from that class," Harrison says. "I still have the papers I wrote for that class. I took that book as my Bible, and as soon as I could afford it, I started traveling to see art."

From the early 1980s on, she's traveled to see some of the world's greatest works in person. In particular, she recalls her recent visit to Amsterdam to see Rembrandt's *The Night Watch* and going to Florence, Italy, to see Michelangelo's *David*. But art, she says, should be more accessible. That's why she has supported Ivy Tech Southern Indiana's visual communication program, which trains aspiring graphic designers and artists. She enjoys meeting students and recently offered to sponsor a gallery displaying their work. The gallery, now named the Pat Harrison Fine Arts & Design Gallery in her honor, stretches along one of the newly built Ogle Hall's main corridors and displays student artwork.



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"It's such a beautiful gallery," Harrison says. "It's just breathtaking. You can walk through in a hurry and just glance, but if you have time, you can really take your time and look at the art. It gives the students another dimension to their education."

Harrison is also involved in the Southern Indiana Arts Council and other causes that support artistic expression. Harrison also plans to help fund the construction of a clock plaza, which will be built at Ivy Tech Southern Indiana in 2013.

"Pat's support of arts in the community is invaluable for our region," said Rita Hudson Shourds, Chancellor of Ivy Tech Southern Indiana. "She has not only offered financial support, but has many times rolled her sleeves up and worked, serving on boards, organizing events, and coming up with creative ways to bring the arts to the forefront in the community. We are delighted that she wants to support Ivy Tech."

Harrison says she believes the work of all artists should be appreciated - whether they are celebrated creators from centuries ago or local artists clicking a mouse and selecting colors on a computer screen. The gallery is especially attractive to her because it allows students a way to gain an appreciation of each other's work and to receive recognition.

"Walking through the gallery takes the day a step above your daily chores and tasks," Harrison says. "That's exactly what art does."