

Robert Roy Guge (August 19, 1952 - November 11, 2013)

Bob Guge: A master sculptor of birds

BY ROBERT MONTGOMERY

Robert Roy Guge, better known as Bob, passed away following a brief illness on November 11, 2013 while in hospice care in Barrington, IL. Born in Carpentersville, IL he developed an interest in birds and the outdoors and discovered his God-given artistic talent in school. Bob began carving with his farther, Roy, and soon began entering his works in shows and rapidly became an international renowned wood sculptor. His natural talent was encouraged and helped by many talented and well known carvers; his father, brother Scott, Harold Hartel, and a group of other local cavers. Not a “birder” per-se; his field identification skill were excellent. He had a sharp eye and a keen memory, retaining the nuances of bird plumage, feather shape, and colors as well as bird behavior and postures. As his skills improved and expanded, he began entering his works at shows and competitions and won regularly. The field of wildfowl sculptors – waterfowl – was already crowded with many outstanding carvers of duck, geese, and shorebirds so Bob carved out his own niche – songbirds and raptors. Regardless of the species they appeared to be ready to get up and fly away.

Bob’s skills were passed on to his eight children that he and his wife, Jody raised. To showcase his work they held an open house during the holiday season. It was a family project to showcase the family’s talents by carving, constructing or sketching, birds, fish, butterflies, fairies, and other creations.



Photo of Bob Guge watching birds.

For more of Bob’s work visit www.wingsinwood.com/index.php.



Photo of one of Bob Guge’s carvings, Yellow-throated Warbler

Teaching and training bird carvers were an important activity for Bob. Holding local workshops as well as giving classes around the country were Bob’s favorite activities, and these classes were filled with enthusiastic carvers. He helped write books on his techniques and developed self-help videos for inspiring carvers.

One of Bob and Jody’s sons, Josh, followed in Bob’s footsteps and became a full time, prize winning sculptor of marine and tropical fishes as well as birds. Together they created the now Elgin based Guge Institute of Wildlife Art, where they offered classes in drawing, painting, and carving to students of all ages.

Bob’s creations or as he referred to them, “Wings-in-Wood,” resulted in many awards at shows through-

out the country; including-five times Best in World at the World Championship Wildfowl Carving Competition in Ocean City, MD. Shortly prior to his death he was presented with The Ward Foundation’s Lifetime Achievement Award. His works are displayed in museums and are part of the permanent collection of the North American Wildfowl Art Museum in Salisbury, MD and the Leigh Yawkey Woodson Art Museum in Wausau, WI as well as private and corporate collections around the world. Among his commissioned works is a series of song birds for Danbury Mint which sells cast reproductions.

Bob’s skills have been passed on to his students and we look forward to seeing them continue his legacy of love for all things wild and to help conserve and protect our wild birds.

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Editor’s Note: We thank the authors for writing memorials to deceased members of the birding community. If you are interested in providing a memorial, please email sheryl.devore@comcast.net