



# Tile Heritage Foundation

for research and preservation of ceramic surfaces

Founded in July 1987 Tile Heritage is celebrating its 30th anniversary this year. Supporters like YOU... members, major contributors, industry sponsors, generous grantors... everyone... have made possible the *continued fulfillment* of the Foundation's mission to Document and Preserve tile history in the U.S., both past and present. THANK YOU!

## *E-News for Summer 2017*

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Cleota Reed touring in Madrid, 2009.  
Photo courtesy of Vance Koehler

## **Tile Historian, Cleota Reed, Receives the Tile Heritage Award!**

On Friday evening, May 19th, approximately 80 invited guests gathered in the Elkins Gallery at the Mercer Museum in Doylestown, Pennsylvania to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the Tile Heritage Foundation. The catered event featured fine hors d'oeuvres, beer and wine as well as a silent auction of special tiles and ceramic objects from artisans throughout North America.

The highlight of the evening was the presentation of the Tile Heritage Award to tile historian Cleota Reed, who unbeknownst to her had been secretly encouraged by her husband and daughter in Syracuse, New York to attend the Foundation's special event. As her family members and friends appeared unexpectedly at the party, she knew something was up.

## Reed Receives Tile Heritage Award... continued

About an hour into the program, Katia McGuirk, a local tile and mosaic artist who serves on the board of directors of Tile Heritage, addressed the assemblage:

"In 1993 the board of directors of Tile Heritage wished to acknowledge those individuals who embodied the Tile Heritage mission in some exemplary way: promoting an awareness and appreciation of ceramic surfaces in the United States. The **Tile Heritage Award** was thus created and first presented to Kenneth Trapp, then Curator of Decorative Arts at the Oakland Museum in California.

"Since that time thirteen (13) individuals have received the award and there are two recipients of the award who happen to be here this evening: Vance Koehler and Frank Giorgini. Please raise your hands and wave. Thank you!

"Since decorative tiles were first produced in the U.S. roughly 170 years ago, few have felt the urge to record with any seriousness the development of tile making in the U.S. An early exception was Edwin AtLee Barber who wrote *Pottery and Porcelain of the United States* in 1893 devoting his Chapter 16, a full 40 pages, to 'Ornamental Tiles.'

"Then in 1941 Helen Stiles in her *Pottery in the United States* managed to write a 24 page chapter on 'Tile' mentioning the Moravian Pottery and Tile Works as having "an interesting history producing interesting tile" and featuring a picture of the Mercer's 'Arkansas Traveler'!

"Finally in 1960 E. Stanley Wires in Boston, a tile contractor turned historian, produced a four part series of articles for the *New England Architect & Builder* magazine: 1 page of 22 was on Mercer and his tiles.

"Why so little scholarship devoted to what, even then, was recognized as a prominently important decorative art form throughout the world, we can only speculate. And why in the early 1980s our dear friend, **Cleota Reed**, decided to devote her life to researching the story of **Henry Chapman Mercer** and his tiles, we can only ask as she is with us here this evening!

"In the Preface to her book *Henry Chapman Mercer and the Moravian Pottery and Tile Works* she wrote: 'Henry Chapman Mercer transformed the art of the ceramic tile in America. He



Cleota Reed (center) receives the Tile Heritage Award from Mandy Baker (left) and Katia McGuirk at the Mercer Museum's Elkins Gallery, May 19, 2017.



## Reed Receives Tile Heritage Award... continued

elevated it from a prosaic form of decoration to a medium of plastic expression capable of conveying original and complex ideas. His work as a ceramist was one of the most distinctive products of the American Arts and Crafts movement and its advocacy of handcrafted decorative objects.'

"Cle's scholarship, her devotion to tiles as a decorative medium, has served as an inspiration to countless folks who have come to Doylestown and become transfixed by Mercer himself, the legend, and his uniquely fabulous designs, installations and tiles that continue to inspire generations of tile makers throughout the United States and beyond, those who work with their hands and create beautiful things to enrich the lives of others.

"Cleota Reed, you have inspired so many. You honor us all in receiving the Tile Heritage Award for 2017."

## "Plus Ultra": A Tile Heritage Award by Mandy Baker



Mandy Baker's original sketch of the Tile Heritage Award for Cleota Reed.

Katia McGuirk continued:

"Way back when, the Tile Heritage board also decided that the award itself should be an actual tile, designed by a tile maker whose spirit and aesthetic related significantly to the award recipient. Mandy Baker was Head Ceramist at the Moravian Pottery and Tile Works when Cle was engaged in the research for her book. Today Mandy lives in nearby Jamison and produces beautiful tiles at her Whispering Hill Studio."

About her sketch Mandy wrote: "The roof is from the viewing tower at the Tile Works; the background is one of Mercer's tapestry panels, adding some texture. The bird and flower hopefully remind Cle of me."

Mandy has been designing and creating art tiles for 25 years. Her inspiration comes from the shapes and patterns found on her home farm and in her garden. Her mastery of the art of traditional tile making stems from her work at the Tile Works in Doylestown.



## Artistry Excels at the 30th Anniversary Silent Auction



"Tristan and Isolde"  
by Alfredo Ratinoff  
16" x 16"



"Scorpio Knitting a Peace Glove"  
by Irene de Watteville  
10.5" x 10.5"



Karen Fishburn's  
"Western Tanager"  
6" x 6"



Batchelder's No. 127 in bronze  
by Adonis Noguera  
3" x 3"



John Beasley's Anniversary Gift  
to Tile Heritage Foundation  
12" x 12"



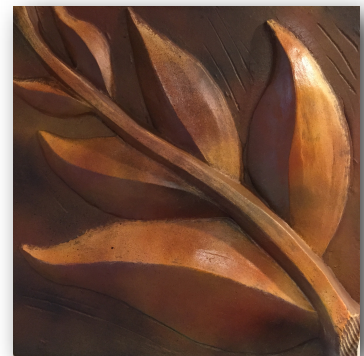
David Ellison's "Dragonfly"  
6" x 6"



Frank Giorgini's "Screach"  
8" x 8"



Pratt & Larson's "Sealife Platter"  
13" diameter



"Sunset Across the Lake"  
by David Dahlquist  
12.5" x 12.5" x 3.75"

**Special thanks to the other tile artists who donated tiles to the Silent Auction:** Eric Boynton, "Dragon"; Joan Gardiner, "Matchbook Mona"; Katia McGuirk, "Owl on Elephant Avatar Jar"; Nawal Motawi, "Pine Landscape" (framed); Carrie Anne Parks, "Blue Love Birds Tiles"; Wendy Penta, "Two Thistles"; Laura Reutter, "Fir Tree"; Stephani Stephenson, "Raven"; Cha-Rie Tang, "Birds with Blossoms"; and Ivette Vaillard, "el pescador."



## Galena Public Library: Hidden Treasures Revealed



Galena Public Library, 601 S. Bench St., Galena, Illinois

Courtesy Galena Public Library.

Galena, tucked into the northwest corner of Illinois (a “walk” from Wisconsin and a swim across the Mississippi River from Iowa), offers two glass mosaic masterpieces showcased in its century-old public library.

In 1895 the town’s primary benefactor, Benjamin Franklin Felt, fostered the birth of the original library above the local post office where it remained for over a decade before a grant was negotiated from Andrew Carnegie, who underwrote the construction of a new building in his preferred classical Greek architecture designed by Claude & Starch, architects in Madison, Wisconsin. The Carnegie grant was matched by Mr. Felt’s daughter, Anna, whose support continued until her death in 1953. The story of this building, well researched by Tom Brusch, is available online at <http://www.galenahistory.org/researching/galena-history/1059-2/>.

The structure itself, made of Indiana limestone, features two magnificent fireplace facades, one on each floor, gifts of Emma Ross, a close friend of the Felt family, who paid \$300 for each one. The glass mosaics were designed and fabricated by Giannini & Hilgart in Chicago.



## Giannini & Hilgart

Orlando Giannini (1861-1928), originally from Cincinnati, followed his father into the art world, initially as a sculptor, then a mural painter, and finally a designer of mosaics and stained glass. His partner, Fritz Hilgart (1869-1942) emigrated from Germany where he trained as a glass cutter.



"Wisteria,"  
upper level  
of the  
Galena Public  
Library,  
601 S. Bench St.  
Galena, Illinois.

Designed by  
Giannini & Hilgart,  
Chicago  
dating to 1907.







## Giannini & Hilgart... continued

The partners created stained glass windows and mosaics for numerous architects including Frank Lloyd Wright, as well as glass lampshades for Teco pottery lamps.

The firm continued to operate after Giannini left for California in 1907 and remains in business today at 1359 North Noble St., Chicago, proprietor Roman Wandzura.

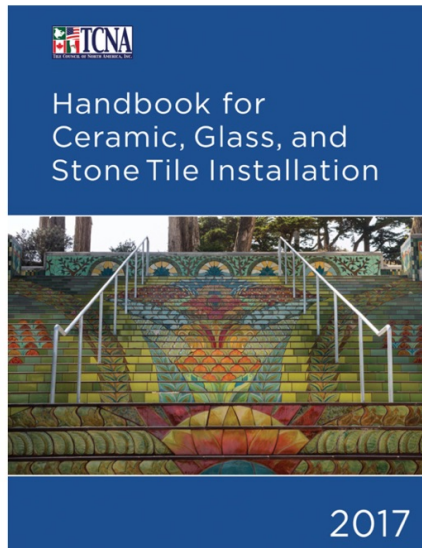


"Virginia Creeper,"  
lower level  
of the  
Galena Public Library,  
601 S. Bench St.  
Galena, Illinois.

Designed by  
Giannini & Hilgart,  
Chicago  
dating to 1907.



# TILE HERITAGE FOUNDATION 30TH ANNIVERSARY 1987-2017



*Tile Heritage Foundation  
sincerely thanks Tile Council of North America  
for generously including the THF 'story' in the  
2017 Tile Initiative Section of the TCNA Handbook.*

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