

Hazel Hannell Permanent Art Gallery to be unveiled March 20

By Times Staff | Posted: Monday, March 14, 2011 12:00 am

VALPARAISO | The Hazel Hannell Collection will be unveiled at a reception beginning at 2 p.m. March 20 at Pines Village Retirement Communities. Special guest speaker will be artist Harriet Rex Smith. Harriet met the Hannells as a high school student and through the years a special bond was formed. The two women spent time together going on painting trips and teaching watercolor. So at 93 years old, Hazel moved to Oregon to live with Rex Smith and paint until her death at the age of 106.



With just the mention of the name, Hazel Hannell, the stories unfold about an artist and advocate of the Indiana Dunes. Moving to Furnessville in the 1930's with her sculptor husband, Vin, Hazel established Hannell Pottery and became known for her work in clay, much of which she dug from their own property.

The Hannell's became icons of the Northwest Indiana art community, and one of the early members of the Save the Dunes Council, working for the establishment of the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore. Hazel's decades of work were known for her profuse wildflowers in vibrant watercolors, dunes landscapes and her wood block series.

Following the legendary Porter County artist's death at 106, Pines Village acquired from the Chesterton Art Center, over 18 never exhibited watercolor paintings that were completed by Hazel in her later years. Throughout the years, many of Hazel's contemporaries had donated works of art to Pines Village and work began to establish a permanent gallery to honor her work and her spirit, particularly when she was of age.

The new collection was cataloged and framed under the direction of Valparaiso University Brauer Museum of Art Director/Curator, Gregg Hertzlieb and a team of young interns.

"We are so excited to share this collection with the public and make a permanent home for Hazel's works, said Laurie Mullet, CEO of Pines Village Retirement Communities. "At Pines Village we actively seek opportunities to foster the promotion of positive aging. Hazel emulated that through her life. We hope this collection lends itself to the continual promotion of the arts and contributory aging."

This permanent gallery will be open to the public from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. Pines Village Retirement Communities, Inc., in Valparaiso, Indiana, is a nonprofit organization that has been providing housing and services for older adults since 1983. For information, call (219) 465-1591 or visit the website at www.pinesvillage.org.