



## Norman “Norm” Provost

By Ann Kreiman  
Senior Spotlighter



A lifelong talent in woodcarving has enabled Norm to enrich not only his own life, but to inspire others to take up this hobby, adding purpose and fulfillment to their lives. Recently, the children in our center’s Preschool were the beneficiaries of Norm’s creative expression.

Norm was born in Newark, New Jersey, to William and Jeanne Provost. He was the fifth in a family of six (four sisters and two brothers).

He joined the Army and served in Okinawa. It was the time between the wars in Korea and Vietnam. Norm’s important assignment was overseeing the missile tracking radar operation. In 1960, his valuable service ended.

Romance blossomed in his Newark neighborhood. He and other young men had their eyes on the beautiful Laura. However, she was carefully guarded by her strong brother, Tommy. Instead of asking Laura for a date, Norm became Tommy’s friend, and eventually, he was happily accepted into the family. The blissful couple wed in 1965. Three children comprise their family – Kellie, Robert and Jennifer.

At first Norm did carpentry work and went on to work in maintenance in the school systems. At the same time, he was encouraged by friends to pursue a higher education. He graduated from Trenton University with a BA; and Rutgers University with a Masters Degree – all concerned with a vocation in special needs.

His career continued in various school systems in New Jersey, followed by five years at the New Jersey Department of Education, as a Vocation Specialist. He continued at the Treasury Department as a Field Representative for the State of Pennsylvania, working on Tuition Accounts programs, and finally retired.

Nineteen years ago, the Provosts bought a house in Ocean Ridge, FL, and became Florida residents. They also have a residence in Bethany Beach, Delaware, and are happy snowbirds.

His life’s work continued designing wooden furniture, and when a hobby store that he frequented was closing, he followed the teacher, Lindy Zack, and moved on to N.E. Focal Point. Woodcarving is great for older people, as they are learning a new skill, as well as socializing. An added benefit is that our members participate in art shows. They have won many awards for their entries as well as gaining publicity for the Center for Active Aging.

Norm’s gift to our Preschool is a “Library Box”, built from recycled materials and adorned with cartoon figures. It is 2 feet long, 16 inches high, and 18 inches wide. It will contain books to take out and also return. Some books have been donated. In the future, there will be a special presentation involving the gift and the children’s reaction to a carving that will encourage them to read.

Norm pays tribute to his teacher and mentor Lindy Zack, who for 20 years impresses him as knowledgeable and helpful, assisting students with their creations. Norm also volunteers helping new members. He credits the Center for Active Aging for its support of the Woodcarving Class and tells us the Senior Center has enhanced his life!