

Artist finds 'beauty all around'

BY KARA ISHAM
ARKANSAS DEMOCRAT-GAZETTE

FAYETTEVILLE — Local artist Gail Stoops knows the peace that painting can bring to a torn life, and she wants to share this contentment with others.

Stoops will be starring in a new series on Jones Television titled *Make Your Mark: Painting With Gail Stoops*. She says she has already taped two shows for the series and is scheduled to tape more episodes this month. The shows are scheduled to air sometime in the next several weeks.

During the shows, Stoops demonstrates how to work in several different mediums and styles.

"Primarily the show will be a vehicle for me to show the joy of painting and show how it can be a healing force and how much fun you can have," she says.

Stoops endured the death of two sons and a husband and says art has been very important in overcoming the shock and grief of losing her family members.

She began painting 17 years ago, just after the death of her youngest son, Gregory. Days before he died he made her promise she would take up painting.

Prior to that, Stoops had been a professional writer. She received a bachelor's degree in journalism and English from Louisiana State University at Baton Rouge.

After Gregory died, she began traveling the country, finding different artists who would teach her to paint and keeping her promise to her son.

"By doing the art, I began to put myself back together and became less fragmented. I felt his presence and every time I accomplished a piece of work it was to honor him."

Three years later she lost a second son, Daniel, and then her husband, Gordon, died of can-

cer in 2002. Each time, Stoops found comfort and strength in her painting.

"I felt that if I could create beauty in the face of something so horrid, it would be a wonderful tribute to them," Stoops says. "Art has carried me to where I now find beauty all

around me and now I have a story to tell."

Stoops moved to Fayetteville from Texas in 2000 to be closer to her daughter and son-in-law, Marianna



Gail Stoops

and Dr. Paul Hendrycy.

Working out of her studio on Manor Drive, Stoops also continues to display her work. She will open a new show in September 2005 called "Hanging by a Thread" at the Walton Arts Center.

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