

Florence Memorial Art School, Inc.

Private Foundation Fact Sheet

The Paul and Florence Thomas Memorial Art School, Inc., a private foundation, was created by Florence Thomas upon her death in 2007. The school was named partly in honor of her late husband, Paul Thomas, as the trust that began the school was from the Thomas family. For over a decade, current Ashe County residents has been seeking to honor the legacy of the late Florence Thomas to bring about art education for generations to come in the Blue Ridge area of North Carolina.

With indigenous influences that attract a wide scale of artists and students alike, Florence Memorial Art School has grown into a local art institute that attracts students and teachers of all walks of life.

Quick Facts:

- Founded in 2007 in Glendale Springs, North Carolina, by Melba Miller, Jane Lonon, and Robert Franklin
- Over 10 voluntary faculty and 5 full-time foundation employees
- Over 20 different curriculums available
- Has taught over 1,500 students in workshops and classes
- Celebrating a decade of education this year

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Mission:

The mission of the Florence Art School is to provide resources for instruction, exhibition and experience in the fine arts and heritage crafts for Ashe County and the region.

- Offering education in all media of the fine arts
- Preserving the cultural heritage of the Blue Ridge Mountains through offering workshops and demonstrations in the heritage crafts
- Engaging underserved youths and adults with meaningful arts experiences through our Outreach Programs
- Promoting and preserving the Florence Thomas legacy
- Providing exhibition space
- Fostering an environment for creative thought and artistic expression

Florence Memorial Art School, Inc.

Our Staff:

Executive Board

- Doug Munroe, Board President
- Diane La Bonte, Vice President
- Karen Hall, Treasure
- Pat Beaver, Secretary
- Ed Perzel, Member At-large
- Melba Miller, Emeritus Director

Directors

- Joanie Bell
- William"Bill" Berry
- Sue Davis
- David and Janice Worth
- Betty Rembert
- Stephen Shoemaker, Emeritus Director

Our History:

- *2007: Florence Thomas leaves a trust to begin Florence Memorial Art School (FMAS)*
- *2008: First workshops of art classes begin on campus*
- *2010: First art galleries open on campus to display old and new pieces of art work*
- *2011: Lodging on campus is upgraded to become cheaper for guests to stay*
- *2012: FMAS won a private grant after winning first place for an art submission*
- *2013: Ashe County Schools begin coalition with FMAS to broaden class spectrums*
- *2014: First annual FMAS art competition with scholarship award*
- *2016: FMAS begins yearlong classes and workshops instead of seasonal*
- *2017: Launch of Andy-At-Home to mass market to expand learning opportunities*