

## **Pioneer Hall of Fame: Grace Eckert Wiant, class of 1968**



Since 1980 Grace Wiant has worked full-time as a self-employed studio artist, creating textile pieces of her own design. During the twenty years following graduation, Grace lived in such varied locales as Australia, Yemen, and England. She returned to the United States in 1991, establishing a studio in Petersburg, Illinois.

From 1980 to 1990 while a resident of Plymouth, England, Grace completed 80 hand-woven tapestries and held many one-person shows, sponsored residencies, and public commissions. It was during this time

period that she experienced one of the highlights of her career – she was presented to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother in London at the unveiling of Grace's commissioned tapestry triptych "Earth, Sea, Sky." In late 1988 she began to experiment with hand-tufted textile work, which then became the focus of her artistry. Grace created 681 one-of-a-kind hand-tufted rugs and tapestries since 1988, making an average of over 900 square feet per year. To date she has sold more than 660 of these works to private and public clients, including Liz Claiborne Company, American Crafts Museum Shop, and Greenpeace (for auction).

Grace's work has been shown in many publications and in video productions. Her work is also displayed in several prominent public collections, including the Victoria and Albert Museum, London; Monmouth Comprehensive School, Wales; and Maidstone General Hospital, London. In 1990 she was a guest tutor and artist-in-residence at the Victoria Tapestry Workshop in Melbourne, Australia. Grace has won numerous awards for her work.

Grace holds a B.S. in Fine Arts from Illinois State University. She lives in Petersburg with her husband Michael and their daughter Elizabeth. Grace's father, Albert Eckert, taught mathematics at University High School for many years, and her five siblings also attended U-High.