Mary Adams Presented The Excellence In Iroquois Art Award

Mary receives her award from Patrick Kehoe, representative from Governor Pataki's Office.

Congratulations to Mary Adams of Tsi Snaihne on her Excellence in Iroquois Art award this past weekend. The award was presented to Mary by Patrick Kehoe, representative of Governor Pataki. The ceremony took place at the Iroquois Indian Museum in Cobleskill, New York.

On October 5th the Museum was proud to present its 1997 Excellence in Iroquois Arts Award to Mary Adams, Akwesasne-Mohawk Basketmaker. This award honors an artist who the Museum feels has achieved excellence in Iroquois arts (the "best of the best"). Anyone who knows Mary Adams' baskets knows how richly she deserves this distinction. Mary Adams joins preceding winners of this award whose work has been done in stone, clay, and antler. Some of these artists honored earlier are academy trained, and others, like Mary, are not. Each has achieved something rare in their work: honest expression of beauty and realization of forms and images that are unique to the Iroquois people.

Mary Adams' artistic career was born out of necessity when she was still a child, needing to help herself and her family survive in difficult times. Her tenacity quickly produced an income that helped her family go forward, and eventually helped to stabilize its life style in the Akwesasne community. This same tenacity coupled with her love for the work, began to produce something else that was and is very fine. With her influence and legacy, basketmaking is an art form the Iroquois people embrace as their own - one that continues to express their connectedness to their land and their way of living in harmony with the world.

Mary has been making baskets almost all of her life. Separating her life from her art is not feasible nor desirable. For her, art is her life, and this is reflected in her exquisite baskets. Through her baskets she has been able to make a living. Through her baskets she has been able to express herself and her feelings about what it means to be alive. Through contemplating her baskets, the audience can gain insights and empathy into the human condition.

Basketry has been one of the primary creative practices of women at Akwesasne for more than a hundred years. Mary has been making baskets for seventy years. She has made baskets for thimbles, scissors, flowers, jewelry, fault, laundry, hiking, needles, buttons, knitting, and sewing. She has also

See Adams on Pg. 13