Barn Studio of Art continues to grow

The Barn Studio of Art is closing in on its 50th birthday but shows no sign of slowing down, even though its founder and director, Millville’s “artist laureate” Pat Witt, recently turned 82.

In fact the 47-year-old institution, nestled in a nature-friendly environment at 814 Whitaker Ave. in Millville where birds, trees and goldfish are the artists’ companions, transitioned to a New Jersey non-profit corporation in 2007. “It was time for the facility to take an important step to keep it open for many years to come,” the founder said, acknowledging that even her boundless energy ultimately has its limits. She has kept the corporation mainly in the family, naming daughters Nancy Witt Mulick and Carole Witt Mankin as Managing Directors. Kelly Alice Andrews, Mankin’s daughter, is Director of Education.

There is also a volunteer Advisory Board of about 20 members, all former students.

Witt established the Studio in 1962 after a distinguished career as an artist. She studied at the Philadelphia Museum of Art, Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts and Glassboro State College. She has had many one-woman shows and been part of group shows at the Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia Art Alliance, the Noyes Museum, Brian Parent Center, and the American Painters in Paris Bicentennial in 1976. She is known as the “Wetlands Painter,” specializing in opaque watercolor and oils.

She said her dream regarding The Barn was “to establish an art studio where people could study drawing and painting in a non-competitive environment. I began with three students and now, through the decades, thousands have studied at The Barn.” Local artists such as Glenn Rudderow, who specializes in nature and landscape, have commented on the non-stressful, relaxing atmosphere at the Studio, saying it contributed to their successful careers in the art world.

That effect is no accident but a carefully prescribed method. The Studio does not teach by having the student copy or trace, nor does it ask for a quantity of productions, according to the directors. The Studio brochure explains, “Each

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Barn Studio prepares future artists for careers

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The lead instructor, Emily Luertz-ing, is a local resident who is herself visually impaired. She has a B.A. of Fine Arts and is a practicing artist. She formerly served as a home instruc-
tor for the Commission of the Blind and Visually Impaired. A prerequisite for the class is that the student be able to read enlarged print on a computer screen.

The Studio’s long history. And age is no restriction. Students range from 3 to 100. The Studio is conducting its summer schedule of classes, which began June 22 and will run through Aug. 1. “Painting, Drawing, Pot-
ttery and Nature” is being offered for children 4 to 7, and “Master Drawing” for age 13 through adult. Other adult programs are “Landscape, Oil, Pastels, Watercolor & All Media” and “Land-
scape.” The classes run once a week for six weeks.

Two special programs are also being offered. One is for the visually impaired child and teenager. Instruc-
tion will center on the Windows Paint Program, and students will learn how to access the Windows Magnifier and create and print his or her own work.

different theories and approaches. The method seems to be working, given

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Children take a nature walk at last year’s Outdoor Art Festival at the Barn Studio of Art.

Another special program is the week-

long Maurice River Landscape Workshop from July 12 through 18. Bill Ternay will lead a team of five other instructors, including Pat Witt. Nancy Witt Mulick is Director of Special Programs. Partici-
pants will meet at the Barn Studio and then depart for a specific location each day for the nature-oriented inspiration of the Southern New Jersey region. An evening cruise along the Maurice River and visits to the Burcham farm along the Maurice River and the East Point lighthouse are part of the itiner-
ary. The week will culminate in an exhibition of works created during the workshop. A final critiquing session will take place on Saturday, the last day.

The Studio held its annual Outdoor Art Festival on June 7. After 47 years it’s clear this institution is firmly en-
trenched in the minds and hearts of the South Jersey artistic community.