

# Jan McCune

“Creating a pendant engages not only my hands but my mind as I problem solve design and construction issues. I love everything about creating pendants: from the initial design work, through the multitude of production steps, to the final polishing of the metal.” A new teaching assignment, a pink slip and an auction drove Jan McCune to steer her talent in painting and printmaking toward a retirement career handcrafting jewelry that has left a mark on the field. Her pendants stand out as “a Jan McCune” piece.

She was teaching traditional 3-D classes plus painting, printmaking and visual communications at Marion (Ind.) High School when the department head retired and Jan was assigned the jewelry classes. She had minimal experience with jewelry-making and admits that often she was “one day ahead of my students” as she learned techniques. She also developed a deep affinity for the medium. “It synthesized distinct strands of my life in a way that neither painting nor printmaking had,” the Delaware County artisan said. “I had expressed my lifelong love affair with nature in landscape paintings or prints, but now I could express it in stone and metal. I collected rocks as a child and was fascinated that I could now turn them into beautiful cabochons. As a printmaker, I loved the look of ink in the grooves of an etched plate. Now, I could incorporate etched surfaces into jewelry and replicate the ink with a patina.”

She taught for two more years, until the department was downsized, she was left without a job and the jewelry classes were taken out of the curriculum. When the school auctioned the jewelry-making equipment, Jan’s winning bids became the start of a metals studio in her home, and her new career was built.