

featured artist

meet resident MARTY KAWADLER

By Jonathan Pappalardo

In Marty Kawadler's world, the eyes are everything. If he doesn't have the eyes than nothing else is going to work. The eyes are the "mirrors of the soul."

Marty is a portrait artist, working exclusively with graphite and charcoal. He began creating likenesses of people in the mid to late 1970s, while he was working as a general science teacher at Dedham High School, general science, five times per day. At that time, he was drawing every day, picking up the craft from the more than 25 art books he had collected.

He stopped teaching and became a financial advisor in 1981. His career occupied nearly all his time and he eventually lost interest in his craft. He worked as a financial advisor until his retirement in 2015. In his 35 years as a financial advisor, he became very successful.

Marty and his wife, EB, then moved to Pinehills from Sharon, where they raised their two daughters and lived for more than 40 years. He was at his home in Boatwright's Loop in September of 2017, when he came across a chair bathed in sunlight. "I ran downstairs to get my forty-year-old sketchbook so I could draw it," said Marty. "It was my first drawing in forty years. I thought to myself, 'I can still do this,' and started drawing again."

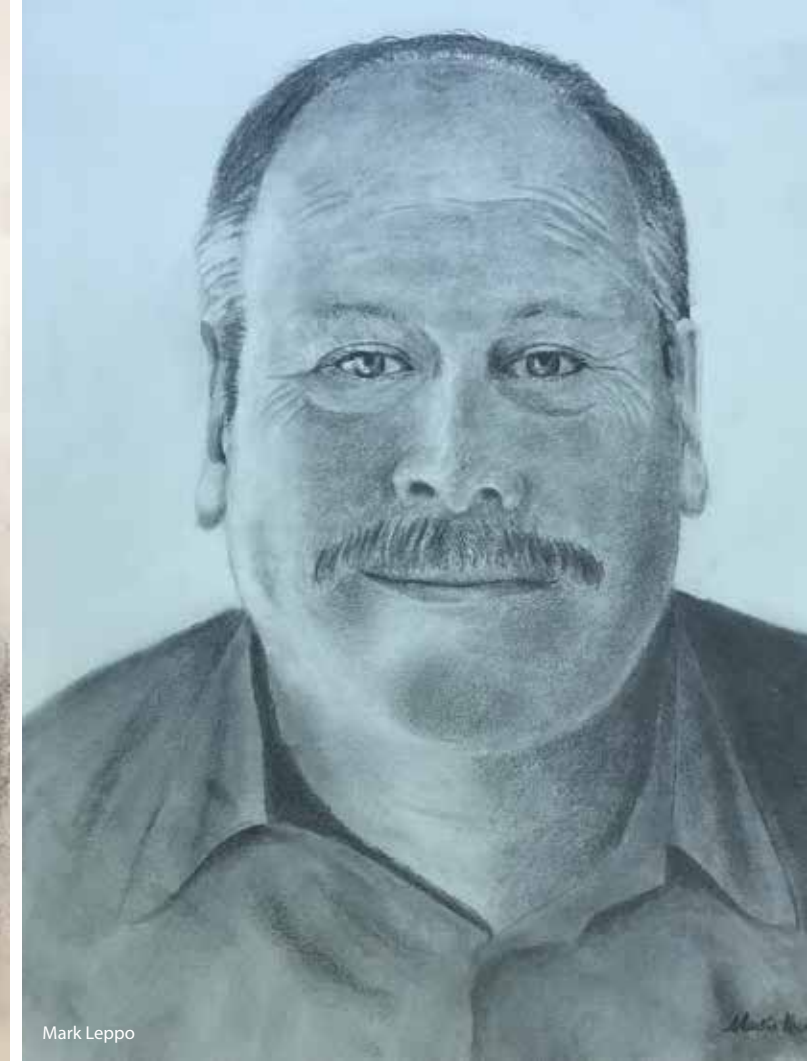
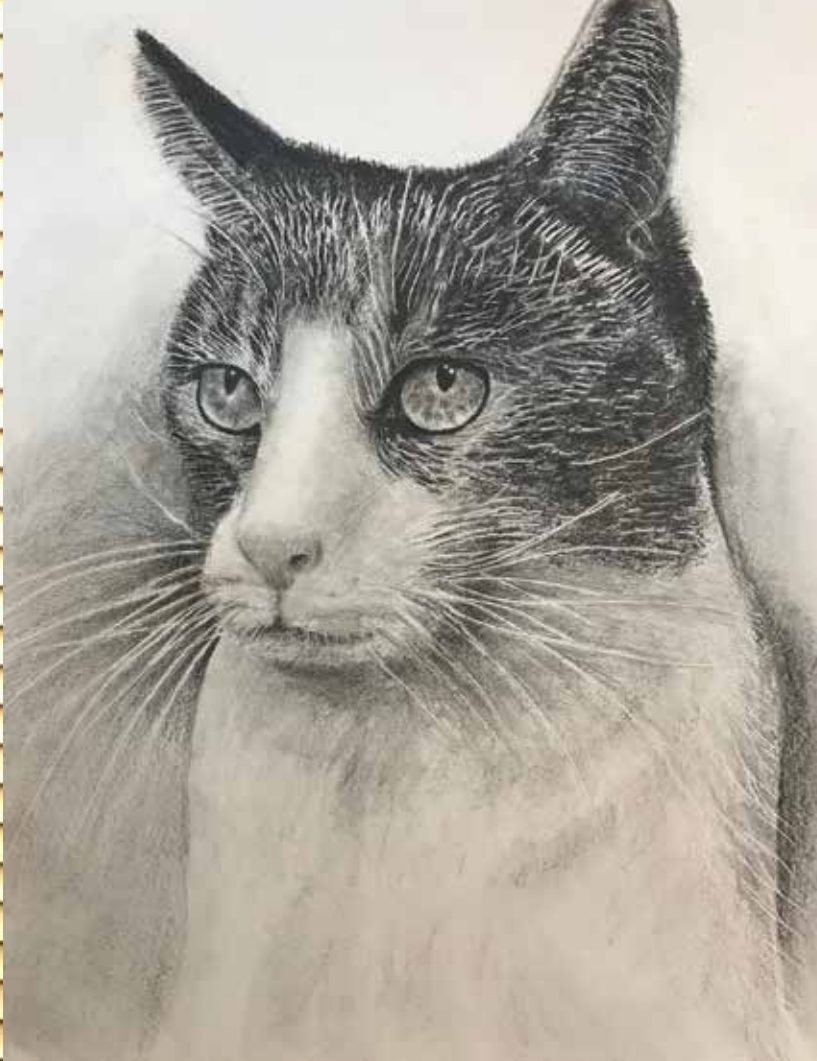
Since getting back into it, Marty has put the focus back on drawing



portraits. He'll begin by taking a series of photographs, often a dozen or more, of his subject and then working off of those to complete the piece. He doesn't simply copy a photograph, but rather uses them as his guide to get the spacing of the eyes and the size of the nose, mouth and head correctly.

His most recent project has hit close to home. Marty says his goal is to become known as the artist of Boatwright's Loop. He's already completed more than thirteen portraits of his neighbors, mostly through asking them if they would like their portrait drawn. The project is nearly complete and now that he's running out of subjects, Marty says he'd be more than happy to draw portraits of anyone in the Pinehills.

While he mostly focuses on drawing people, Marty says he would draw pets as well. A woman recently asked him to draw her dogs. She provided pictures and he consulted the Internet for further examples of her dog's breed. He completed and presented her with the finished product right before she suffered a mini-stroke and mini-heart attack. In the midst of all this, one of the dogs he drew passed away. "She told me, looking at this picture of the dog made me feel a lot better, particularly in light of what I'm going through," Marty said. "That made me feel good."



Mark Leppo

Marty has also drawn pictures of houses and porches of buildings in Pinehills. People like to see an artist's rendering of their home. It makes a special connection for them.

In terms of price, Marty usually doesn't charge anything for his work. He says he's had a successful career and doesn't need the money, nor does he want people to feel they have to pay him for a drawing. Instead, he wants the money that would go to him to go to charity. He's researched charities, everything from police survivors, dogs for the blind, breast cancer, environment, animals, disabled children, and hunger and has chosen ones with an A+ rating, meaning very little money goes directly to salaries and expenses. He wants people to give what they feel comfortable giving. "An amount that is appropriate," says Marty.

As for his process, Marty says that he works sporadically. He'll work on

a piece for an hour or two, put it aside and come back to it. He'll even hold it up to a mirror to see the drawing in reverse. These new perspectives and a fresh eye allow him to see things he didn't see before in the drawing.

Marty says he'll work at any time of day, depending on the weather. But when he starts a piece, he always cranks up classical music, usually Beethoven. In the middle and finishing stages of a piece, the music changes to The Moody Blues and typically ends with Pink Floyd. Marty says he picks up a pencil "most days of the week."

When he isn't drawing, Marty occupies his time playing golf, baseball and softball. In Florida, he's played in the Roy Hobbs World Series, a major baseball tournament spanning three weeks each November. Marty has played in the 70+ division and his team has even won the championship.

But his main passion is his art. If he likes how a piece comes out, he'll frame it for the individual before presenting it to them. In fact, he almost always frames his work before handing it over to the subject. It's all part of the fun. "I love drawing, particularly if you do



First Pinehills drawing

something well and it comes out and you capture somebody," Marty said. "I try to make complimentary drawings, emphasizing good features and de-emphasizing unattractive features. If people want an exact likeness, they should have a photograph taken. If you can capture someone's inner personality in a portrait than you've got something that will be your legacy, treasured by the families of the person you did it for, for generations to come."