

Shirley Holstrom - Witnow Group

A spot in the new house under construction on Summer Drive is the current workshop for Timberon's local woodworker Shirley Mohon Holstrom. This New Mexico native uses interesting pieces of wood - some exotic, some local, pieces of acrylic, deer or elk antler, and other unusual materials, to carve into the round casing for a custom handcrafted keepsake memorial cremation urn. "I make items that are one-of-a kind and specially made for a certain individual."

While Shirley is on her Jet mini-lathe, she is focusing on a small piece of material spinning between 500 and 3975 rpm, slowly moving her sharp chisel along the piece, sending tiny chips floating into the air and all over the place. Within a few minutes, the piece begins to take shape. She shapes it by sight and feel, using no forms, not measuring the width, but listening and watching the material as it becomes a special piece. She often sands it to 12,000 grit in the finishing process. "I take great care to put my best quality in each piece I create. Satisfaction is guaranteed."

Born and raised on a cotton farm near Roswell, NM, I retired after 25 years of a satisfying career as a Contracting Officer for the USDA Forest Service. After retirement, I was a Contract Specialist/Administrator for OMICRON Safety & Risk Technologies, a nuclear safety corporation headquartered in Albuquerque, for almost 10 years. My husband Burr and I wanted to move to the mountains for a simpler life, so in 2006 we began to build our octagon home in Timberon, south of Cloudcroft, in the beautiful Sacramento Mountains. It was there that I honed my wood-working skills and re-energized my passion for working on the lathe.

In 2009, I established WITNOW Group, a small business with two divisions - WITNOW Custom Woodworks, and WITNOW Custom Affirmations.

A member of the Timberon Volunteer Fire Department, I keep busy, to say the least. I am learning the art of watercolor and woodcarving to expand and embellish my work on the lathe. I am an active member of the Cloudcroft Art Society. Working at putting more positive energy into our world, I am a regular monthly columnist for the Mountain Times Newspaper, published in Timberon. I also create and sell positive affirmations, engraved on authentic Cherokee buffalo bone chips, under WITNOW Custom Affirmations.



I exhibited in the following arts & craft shows in 2009:

- Western Days in Timberon, NM, Independence Day July 4, 2009
- Labor of Love in Timberon, NM, Labor Day weekend September 6, 2009
- Silver Spur Gun Show in Alamogordo, NM, September 26-27, 2009