



### **The Heart of the Arts District in Winston-Salem**

There's almost too much to see when you walk into the Piedmont Craftsmen gallery downtown on Trade Street. In a good way. Gorgeous glassworks catch the light pouring in from the wall of windows at the front of the space, intricate pottery is anywhere you look, matted, graphic prints are located in several bins all around, and handmade, delicate pieces of jewelry are lined up like soldiers in several display cases on the gallery floor. It's a whole lot of beauty and, more than that, an incredible display of talent to take in all at once.

This year marks the impressive 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Piedmont Craftsmen. Fifty years ago, Piedmont Craftsmen was founded with the same mission that they operate under today – to give artists a community where their talent can be expressed and appreciated, and also to educate the community on the world of the arts through events and activities that showcase different artists, art forms and artistic processes.

Currently, Piedmont Craftsmen boasts nearly 400 member artists, as well as around 800 supporting members. They are truly a foundational part of the arts community in Winston-Salem and the Triad area. "It has taken a long time for the arts district in Winston-Salem to truly form. Nearly 30 years," says Jane Doub, Piedmont Craftsmen's President and CEO. "We have watched it all happen and are very proud of where it stands today. It's so important to have a place where artists can be creative but an organization can be strong, and we are so glad that we are in that place."

Piedmont Craftsmen has been in its current space on Trade Street for a little over 10 years, and they are proud to be a centerpiece of the area. The growth that they have seen over their history, they know, is in part to all of the folks – Butler + Burke included - who have made the business part of running a non-profit organization a success. "We've worked with Butler + Burke since 1993," Doub says. "We're really more just friends with them by this point. Everyone there is so approachable. But they are also very transparent in how they handle our work, and it is always so comforting to know that such expertise is there."

The celebration of the half-century milestone that Piedmont Craftsmen meets this year is in full swing. March 29 will bring an official anniversary gala at, fittingly, the Milton Rhodes Center for the Arts. An upcoming series of shows is being titled "Party On!" and will center around the theme of celebration and how a wide variety of artists present that idea. Piedmont Craftsmen certainly has a lot to celebrate. And their future should be just as bright as the colors that the light picks up in their gallery.