

# CHEROKEE PHOENIX



Cherokee National Treasure Eddie Morrison shows a piece he's working on at his studio in Tahlequah. JAMI MURPHY/CHEROKEE PHEONIX

## **Cherokee finds, maintains passion for sculpting**

Cherokee Nation citizen Eddie Morrison sculpts eyelids on piece of art. JAMI MURPHY/CHEROKEE PHEONIX

BY JAMI MURPHY

Reporter

11/07/2014 08:34 AM

TAHLEQUAH, Okla. – Cherokee Nation citizen Eddie Morrison has been creating art in Tahlequah since the 1970s. But it wasn't until about 1985 that he discovered his true passion – sculpting.

“Of course I grew up around people doing things with their hands, people making art” Morrison said. “My best friend’s father would make homemade, traditional bows and I would watch him cut that wood for hours. And my grandmother always crocheted, made quilts and different things. Other family members did something with their hands all the time creating things. Of course, they were creating them for a different purpose than what I do.”

He said in the 1970s he began painting because he loved Native art and always appreciated it.

“So I got me some paint and what I needed to paint and did some sketching and painting and I was just on a whim – they had that Philbrook Indian Art Show back then – I submitted some pieces in that and had two pieces accepted,” he said. “It was really something to see those in the show.”

He said he continued painting and going to small art shows, but in the 1980s he felt like he always struggled with painting so he decided to try carving.

“So I got my pocket knife out and got some wood and started carving and it came pretty natural,” he said. “After cutting the end of my finger off and having it sewn back on, I learned a lot of things on what not to do, but anyway it just felt natural. I don’t know how to describe it other than the fact that it’s like, I imagine it in my head and it goes around and comes out my hands into the piece. And that’s kind of the way I work today. I just look at the piece, go with the natural lines in the wood or the stone.”

Morrison said he was influenced after taking a marble stone carving class in Denver, with well-known Apache artist Allan Houser. He said he was encouraged to continue his studies at the Institute of American Indian Arts in Santa Fe, New Mexico, where he received a degree in three-dimensional arts.

He said the journey since has been one of ups and downs. The life of an artist, he said.

“There’s a lot of ups and downs when you’re in the art business. That’s one thing that I know that you have to have – stay-with-it power,” Morrison said. “I’ve seen a lot of great artists give up over the years because they just couldn’t stay with it, financial disappointment or something. If you love it, you’re going to do it.”

Even with the ups and downs he said his kinds of abilities don’t go away.

“It’s a passion within you I think, and it’s a gift from the Creator and it won’t go away that I’ve every found, and I still get a thrill to this day after 38 years later being an artist. It can still excite me when I create a piece,” he said. “Sometimes I’ll create a piece and sit back and say did I do that. It’s rewarding.”

His efforts eventually led to him begin honored as a Cherokee National Treasurer – the pinnacle of his career, he said.

To see his work on Facebook go to [https://www.facebook.com/eddiemorrisonstudio?ref=br\\_tf](https://www.facebook.com/eddiemorrisonstudio?ref=br_tf) or view it at the Cherokee Nation Gift Shop and the Spider Art Gallery in Tahlequah.