

Treemont resident's art reflects adventure-filled life

Walk into her home on B-2 and you'll think you're in an artist's studio — as indeed you are.

Treemont resident Mae Barclay has been involved in art of all kinds since early childhood.

Her paintings line the walls and her sculptures fill the window sills, while books and artifacts on her tables reflect her varied interests.

Born in Baton Rouge, La., Barclay at an early age showed artistic talents, which her parents wisely recognized and rewarded with the best art teachers available.

At age 8 she was enrolled in an adult art class, where her works sometimes excelled the adults' efforts.

She laughs over one memory of working with a nude model. Too shy and embarrassed to lift her eyes above the model's feet, she concentrated on painting one big toe,

and won the award for "originality and careful detail."

After graduating from Louisiana State University, Barclay continued her education at the Traphagen School of Fashion Design in New York City.

In her 20s, she met and married a young ge-

One is of a nearby village with narrow streets and colorful tile roofs, and the other two show the view from her windows of mountain after mountain, with not another house in sight.

Always resourceful, she saw a need and filled it by starting the first English-language newspaper in her area, the *Caracas Journal*.

From Venezuela they moved to Portugal, and then to Mexico City. In Mexico she worked with the controversial and artistically gifted Diego

Rivera on the 20-foot mural he had been commissioned to paint at the Mexico City Airport.

She also developed her gifts as a sculptor. A striking example of her work of that genre is a giant grasshopper showing every whisker and muscle, and cast in bright brass.

Tragedy invaded her life when their one child

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Resident, Treemont Retirement Community

ologist, Stewart Barclay, and embarked on a married life of travel and adventure far from Baton Rouge.

They began married life in Venezuela, and three large oil paintings hanging over her sofa reflect the breathtaking beauty and at the same time the isolation and loneliness she experienced.



RODOLFO HERNANDEZ PHOTO

SETTLED IN: Treemont resident Mae Barclay keeps her apartment — which looks much like an artist's studio — decorated with her work.

was 2 years old. At age 41, her husband suffered a cerebral hemorrhage and died instantly.

When asked how she endured such pain after only 12 years of marriage, she replied, "I've always been a woman of faith, and I prayed a lot."

Moved by her own need for adult contacts as well as the necessity of filling the financial void left by her husband's untimely death, Barclay turned back to her Traphagen roots in fashion design

and began an advertising agency.

Coming to Treemont six years ago, she has found pleasure, contentment and delight at the community.

Asked what she enjoys most about being here she said, "Being near my son and his wife, and college-coed daughter" and "the loveliness of Treemont itself — its beauty and convenience, and especially the warmth and friendliness of the staff and residents."

Nor does her artistry lie dormant. Even with limited space she still manages to write and illustrate children's books. She also does small sculptures including classical adult figures, with some whimsical ones as well revealing her versatility and humor.

Contributed by Lois McCall, Treemont Tattler. For more information about Treemont Retirement Community, call 713-783-6820 or go to www.treemont.com.