

MEMBER

Spotlight

JULY • AUGUST • SEPT. 2016

Vince Spellane



My name is Vince Spellane, I currently reside in Westmoreland County and have been practicing taxidermy for over 25 years. My story is a little different than most.

Growing up I always had a love for nature and the outdoors. I spent most of my time exploring the woods around my parents home. During this time my intrigue with animals continued to grow. I would collect various skulls, and bones and began to study animals. I always had an interest in art and science, two things that usually don't go together, until I discovered taxidermy. While looking through a Field and Stream magazine, I found an ad for a taxidermy catalog and started making squirrel skin rugs for my friends, and preserving animal tails from the products I had found.

As time went on I tried larger projects and taught myself through trial and error as well as VHS tapes. In 2006 while looking for outdoor shows to attend to bridge the time after hunting season, I ran across an ad for the Pennsylvania Taxidermy Association and a show they were having at the Altoona Convention Center. I remember calling the President at the time, Ray Kowalski, and asking what I had to do to attend the show.

Needless to say, I was amazed by what I saw at the show. I remember feeling that I was finally with my people. Most people I knew thought taxidermy was a little weird and had no understanding of what it entailed. I not only stumbled onto people that had similar interests, I found hundreds of them in one place. This one experience changed my life.

The following year I decided to not only attend the show but to bring a piece and compete. I can sincerely say that becoming a

member of this organization and competing, has changed my life in many ways. I have made numerous friends, been inspired to better myself and my work, as well as gained an unmeasurable amount of taxidermy knowledge.

I have been a member of the Pennsylvania Taxidermy Association for the past 10 years and an active board member of our association for the past five years. As far as the competition end of things I recently dismantled the mount that I took to Altoona the first year I competed and remounted it. This was a special project for me and was a reflection of the past 10 years. I chose a pose similar to the pose that I had

won my first blue ribbon with in the professional division. I used the antlers from my first competition piece and from one of my most memorable archery hunts of all time. The head was from my first sculpture I ever made. The apple on the base was off of my last world show entry and the rock was from a mold that I made a while back for the first seminar I gave for the organization.

Things came full circle for me in March 2016 when I was completely surprised and honored to win the Breakthrough Award with this mount. To say that that night was special would be an understatement. To win is an amazing feeling but to be able to do it with a piece that had so much meaning and reflection of my journey to this point was very special to me. I hope my story may inspire someone just starting out as I was several years ago. Your greatest limiting factor is you, yourself. Believe in yourself, work hard, never give up, and you will accomplish your dreams.

In closing, I again want to say thank you to everyone who has continued to make this organization grow and thrive and those who have shared their knowledge and have inspired me.

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