

Artfully Framed at the Lake Combines Framing & Gallery

Karen Maynard has parlayed her many years of experience in art framing into her own business at Smith Mountain Lake.

Maynard opened Artfully Framed at the Lake in August 2003. One of the reasons she opened her own art framing business and gallery was to be closer to her home near Smith Mountain Lake.

"My husband and I had lived out here for 12 years and I'd decided that I wanted to have a business here closer to home versus driving to Roanoke every day. I'd done that for 12 years and was a little tired. The last place I worked, he decided to close the store down and I said this is my sign saying it's time to do something. I knew if I didn't do it then I'd never do it," Maynard explains.

After she had made the decision to open a framing shop, Maynard first sought the advice of one of her former employers and asked for suggestions. Then she heard about the Roanoke Regional Small Business Development Center and turned to the business counselors there to help her turn her idea into a reality.

Maynard met with RRSBDC Director Roy Baldwin who assisted her with developing a business plan. After completing a working business plan, Baldwin and Maynard then began work on financial projections, including projected cash flow, for the business. Armed with a well thought out business plan, financial projections and two decades of art framing experience, Maynard approached Franklin Community Bank to ask for a small business loan.



Karen Maynard, owner of Artfully Framed at the Lake

"I went to Franklin Community Bank and within a half an hour they said 'you're in business Karen,'" she recalls.

Maynard has also taken advantage of training seminars offered by the Roanoke Regional SBDC before opening of her framing shop and art gallery near Smith Mountain Lake. She attended a polished professional seminar, a women's small business seminar held at Roanoke College, and both the "First Steps to Starting a Business" and SCORE Start-Up Workshop.

Artfully Framed at the Lake is located in the Westlake Commons in Hardy. Most of Maynard's clients are area residents. During the summer months she also works with clients who own summer homes at the lake.

As a one-woman operation, Maynard is both the CEO and the janitor at her shop. She is working with other galleries and area photographers with framing. She has an agreement with a lake-based gallery allowing the buyers of artworks to have them framed at her shop at a discount.

Maynard has also opened her

shop up to local artisans. She features an artist each month allowing the artist to show and sell their work at her gallery. She receives a 30 percent commission on the artworks that are sold.

"When I first opened up I started with some of my friends from back in West Virginia. They brought a lot of their pieces I had on consignment so that I would have something on the walls. After opening I learned about some of the area artisans and they have come to me and asked if I would work with them," she explains.

She works with about 30 artists and many different mediums. Her gallery features paintings, photographs, prints, pottery, metal art, and glass art.

Maynard's custom framing of artworks and photographs has also gained her repeat business. She enjoys working with artists and also showcasing their works.

When asked what she enjoys most about having her own business, she replies, "I always get the satisfaction that you own your own business and that you don't have someone else to answer to. The biggest satisfaction is seeing a completed frame job. I get a thrill out of seeing how something turns out when it's framed. I just love the interaction with people.

The drawback to owning her business is "all of the paperwork," Maynard says. "You've got to be the jack of all trades and the master of none," she jokes.

Artfully Framed at the Lake is located at 13105 Booker T. Washington Highway in Hardy, Va. For more information, call (540) 721-1218 or email framedatthelake@aol.com