

Pat Godin

Pat Godin (b. 1953) grew up in Brantford, Ontario, Canada, where he was fascinated with the natural world. As a young teenager he began carving—not wildfowl at first, but lures for fishing. In 1967, inspired by a hunter who made his own decoys, Pat tried to make his first gunning stool. That first duck didn't do so well; it sank. Still, the hunting friend inspired Pat to attend carving shows and learn more about the craft. He tried his hand again, and in 1973 Pat began entering carved wildfowl into competition. Since the early 1970s he has racked up scores of honors and awards for his artistic, life-like decorative decoys and wildfowl carvings, including Best of Show awards at competitions throughout the United State and Canada.

As a young man, Pat studied fisheries and wildlife biology at the University of Guelph (Ontario). He has been a full-time carver since receiving his Master's degree in 1979, though his academic training has always influenced his carving. Pat strives to craft "biologically, anatomically, and ecologically correct" pieces. He emphasizes "capturing the character" of an animal by "putting life into the carving," through creative arrangements of habitat subjects, and painted "illusions on the surface" of his work. Over the years Pat has also become a respected writer and lecturer, in addition to carver. He has written, illustrated, designed, and published three instructional books for bird carvers, as well as illustrated and authored a respected waterfowl reference book.

Pat's attention to biological detail, and dedication to pushing the limits of creativity and artistry in carving, have led to an impressive number of awards and honors. He has won 13 Best in World titles in four categories at the Ward World Championships—at least one in each of the five decades of the competition's existence. In 1993 Pat was invited to represent North American carvers at the opening of the International Bird Carving Exhibition in Yokohama, Japan. His work has been displayed in the Ward Museum of Wildfowl Art, the Smithsonian Institution, the Leigh Yawkey Woodson Art Museum, and in many private collections. In 1994 Pat was inducted into the Easton Waterfowl Festival's Hall of Fame, and in 2001 he was honored by his home town of Brantford with an induction into the Walk of Fame. This honor includes a bronze plaque with his biography in the city—nearby other notable inductees such as Wayne Gretzky and Alexander Graham Bell. The Ward Museum is pleased to recognize Pat's significant influence as a preeminent wildlife artist in the carving community.