

# Honoring Elaine Jacob

The woman after whom the Jacob Foyer at the Gualala Arts Center is named is a plain-spoken, practical minded individual with a sense of civic responsibility who sees a need and acts to deal with it. As one of the many individuals who have made the Arts Center into the lynchpin of the community it has become, she is a fitting choice to be honored at this year's Art in the Redwoods Top Hat dinner.

Born in Detroit Michigan, Elaine Jacob showed an early interest in design when she created an original tablecloth at the age of three. She still has that first project. In 1942 she graduated from Wayne State University with a degree in Industrial Design, an unusual choice for a woman in that era.

Her connections with Wayne State are strong. The home of her grandfather, Max Jacob, now serves as the official residence of the university's president. In addition, she has supported an endowed chair named in her honor in the Visual Arts Department at the school in conjunction with the Elaine L. Jacob Gallery, which was created in 1997.

Her professional career includes work in animation, jewelry design, publishing, college teaching in business systems and industrial design. She worked in the family glass container business founded by her grandfather and in the 1950s she helped develop the plastic division, an endeavor that led to her becoming the first woman president of the National Association of Container Distributors.

In the early 60s on her way up Highway 1 with some family members, she noticed the sign for The Sea Ranch. She asked the driver to stop and within four hours she bought a lot. Always practical, Elaine says she eventually came to The Sea Ranch, because "compared to Detroit, there was better weather here." Eventually she bought a small house for vacations until she retired and moved to The Sea Ranch permanently in late 1984.

Using her talents in design and fired by her interest in art, she was involved in the early planning meetings for the new Gualala Arts Center. During the design of the foyer, Elaine rejected the idea of vinyl flooring. "It

would not hold up to heavy use." So she donated the India slate that now beautifies the area. But it almost didn't happen.

When builders were preparing to sheetrock the foyer staircase railing, Elaine suggested the board and batten exterior theme to be carried inside the building. There were some objections and the talk grew heated and she said, "I'm going to take my floor and go home." A quick look at the foyer and the floor indicates who won that argument!

Like countless others Elaine Jacob willingly shares her talents and resources whenever it is obvious that people need something. She represents what is best in our community and serves as an encouraging role model for others. This spirit combined with her design talent and love of art makes her a perfect candidate to be honored at this year's Top Hat dinner to kick off the forty-eighth Art in the Redwoods.



Elaine Jacob will be honored during the 2009 Top Hat Dinner