

Pocket change: artist designs new nickel

by Margo Wright



Susan Gamble works at a drafting table in her home near Oklahoma City after doing initial design work on her computer. She's one of 24 artists selected to submit designs for a new nickel, the first change to the coin in 66 years.

TINKER AIR FORCE BASE, Okla. — When the U.S. Mint issued a nationwide call for artists in November, it received 306 applications from professional and student artists interested in participating in its Artistic Infusion Program.

One of those applications was from graphic designer **Susan Gamble**, who read about the program in a newspaper article. Now she is one of 24 artists selected from across the country by U.S. Mint officials to create original designs for the nation's coins and medals.

"I was delighted to know that the mint is making an attempt to put historical art in the hands of everyday people," said the wife of Col. **Michael Gamble**, commander of the 72nd Air Base Wing's Mission Support Group.

Mrs. Gamble and the other artists attended an orientation at the U.S. Mint in Philadelphia to learn about the history of coin and medal design, the coin-making process and upcoming design opportunities.

The artists must present a design for at least one coin during their one-year contracts, but they can submit designs for all of the projects they're offered. She said the artists are paid as contractors for each design submitted, whether or not it's selected; however, the payment is doubled for the selected design.

"At this point, we are all thrilled to simply be part of a process that'll raise the bar for beauty in American coins," Mrs. Gamble said. "None of the artists are really expecting any design to be selected, and the general consensus is that it's an honor to simply be part of the new design-selection process."

— Crystal Toenjes
Oklahoma City Air Logistics Center
Public Affairs

The first assignment for artists is to submit ideas for the second two nickels in the four-coin Westward Journey Nickel Series. For more details on the assignment, read the full version of this story by visiting Air Force Link at www.af.mil/news/story.asp?storyID=123007204.