

Macefield

goldsmith & silversmith



Macefield

Sterling necklace with gemstones

by Harvey Kornicks

William Mason and Leonard Field first met each other in the late 1940s. Leonard studied at an art school in Boston and Bill attended Massachusetts School of Art and then took jewelry and silversmithing courses at the Boston Museum School.

When their studies were completed they together opened a shop in Winchester, Massachusetts. Their second location was at 10 Winchester Place directly across from the Winchester police station. Their shop name, Macefield, came from the combination of their last names.



Macefield
Gold and pearl pin

It was in the early 1970s, during my move from Miami to Winchester, Massachusetts, that I first met Bill and Len. I remember walking around Boston trying to get an apprentice job in the jewelry business. Most of the arts and crafts jewelers at this time were not interested in taking on another person.

While staying Winchester, however, a friend suggested that I should go into a shop where he had seen wonderful jewelry displayed. It was the Macefield shop and when I did go in a friendship began that changed my attitude about jewelry as an art form. I showed Bill and Len a few of my jewelry designs and, with their approval, was permitted to use their work benches everyday from the early 1970s to the mid 1980s after school (I taught art in the public school system).



Macefield
Sterling necklace with pearls

One of the gentlemen who worked as a silversmith for Macefield from the early beginning was Mark Allen. Prior to the Museum school Mark also studied with another silversmith and jeweler Paul Ravelion along with Bill Mason who at that time taught at the Cambridge Adult Center in Harvard Square. Through the encouragement of Bill, Mark studied jewelry making and sculpture at the Boston Museum School in the early 1950s.

Bill and Len spoke very highly of Mark as being one of the best engravers that they have known. Mark helped to make some of the pieces that Len designed. He must have personally made about fifteen hundred pieces from Len's designs from about 1954-1965. These numbers do not reflect the number of pieces that Bill would have made during the same period. For every piece of jewelry made by Macefield there were at least three or more views drawn by Len.



*Macefield
Gold pin with agate*

Mark followed the traditional belief, that it is very important for a jeweler to be well trained and I know that both Bill and Len also shared this belief. I just missed knowing Mark by a few years, even though we met early on in their shop.

I know that Bill and Len respected my designing abilities and believed in my potential for growth first as an artist and secondly as a jeweler. And I believe Bill was somewhat inspired in the later years by my ideas, our conversations and some of my creations. Their inspiration and knowledge enabled me to go on to show my work at the Society of Arts and Crafts.

All of Macefield's designs were one of a kind pieces, never being reproduced unless a customer lost the piece of jewelry--Len kept some of the customer drawings in the shop for safe keeping. Before purchasing, in order for each customer to have a better idea of what would be made for them, Len would draw a few sketches in scale and, once the preliminary drawings were approved, he would usually create another three views (usually in color) of what their jewelry would look like. This was usually done on tracing paper or card stock the size of a business card.

Len was usually the one who would greet the customers while Bill was busy at his work bench listening to Opera. On Tuesdays Len would take the train from Winchester to Boston where he would purchase supplies from C. W. Somers and if a customer wanted diamonds, there would have been another stop to make in Boston.



*Macefield
Gold pin with opal*

At heart, Bill was an artist. Although Len did most of the drawings there would always be conversations about his designs with Bill before they were made. When things were slow, Bill, along with Len, would design the masterpieces that the public seldom saw. They not only made designs for women but were also perfectionists in creating jewelry for men. Len also strongly believed in the practicality of the jewelry to be worn and, no matter what the price range, the pieces were expected to be finished without any imperfection.

Len used odd numbers of stones in his designs which helps to identify their (Bill's and Len's)pieces.

Most of the semi-precious stones they used were cut by Philip Parsons, a Winchester resident. This gave Bill and Len flexibility in designing, whether fish, butterflies or flowers.



Macefield
Silver & gold ring with jade and opal

Len could put together unlikely shapes that flowed evenly for the eye to enjoy. Usually this was once again in groupings of odd numbers. A favorite technique was the use of silver or gold dust solder on their designs. This gave an etched look to the finished surface.



*Macefield
Sterling & gold bracelet with faceted amethyst and diamonds*

Bill was slightly more daring in his designs which were often asymmetrical--many over three inches in diameter. In the beginning days, I remember seeing these in the display cases. The larger pieces all went to clients who purchased major pieces. Customers would come from as far away as Concord Massachusetts to purchase Macefield jewelry.



*Sterling silver "Grapes" pendant with hoop designed by Bill Mason.
The amthysts were tumbled and drilled by Phillip Parson.*

They used a variety of colors of stones for most of their pieces.

The stones would be of the the highest quality cut and included semi-precious stones such as lapis, moonstone, opal, jade, carnelian, amethyst, ruby, sapphire, etc. Any stones that required channel setting usually were taken into Boston. Diamond setting was usually done by Bill whom kept an impeccable work bench. Custom-made bezels by Macefield allowed light to show through the bottom; very few of their designs with stones had solid backings.

Even as time progressed, most of the cleaning after polishing was done with traditional methods; they would clean during each step of the finishing process, using hand soap along with a drop of ammonia and warm water, drying each the piece with paper towels. I remember seeing a smile on Bill's face the first time he used the Ultra Sonic cleaner that I purchased as a thank you gift for them.



*Macefield
Gold ring with lapis*

Their window display faced the police station and was as perfect and meticulous as their jewelry designs. The display area for the jewelry in their shop was approximately ten by fifteen feet with four counter-type display cases. One display case was dedicated to the higher end custom work, usually in gold with higher quality stones. The second display case was for smaller pendants, and pins in gold, the third was for silver items with or without stones and the fourth was dedicated to the men's jewelry--belt buckles, cufflinks, tie tacks, rings and money clips. Mark Alan had a few of his engraved pieces in the men's case to show some examples of his work.

I would consider Bill and Len's jewelry "Modernist" in that their designs were just as important as the materials they used. Len truly believed in the balance of the piece along with the practicality and comfort for the customer.

If the designed called for machine-like perfection with a traditional look, they would call on Alan to do that work, once again using complete drawings from Len.

Even though each piece was unique and one of a kind, they were able to keep up several shops; one on the Cape run by Mark Allen and another shop on Nantucket. They would pack up their Winchester inventory around June which included jewelry and pottery by other artisans, Bill's stain glass windows and the hangings that he was very proud of and move to Nantucket. Sometime in the late 1970s or early 1980s they quite going to Nantucket and hired a gentleman named Robert Hall to run the shop for them.

The only thing Bill and Len loved more then creating was their flower and vegetable gardens at their farm along with entertaining for the lucky friends who came to enjoy Bill's cooking and Len's apple pie and Gin and Tonic. They had a loyal following of friends and customers, many of them owning dozens of pieces of their work.

At the farm Bill had a upper loft work studio in which he create stained glass, wood carvings and paintings.



Macefield
Sterling silver 'Kiss' pin

During the early 1980s Bill started experimenting once again with charcoal casting of individual pieces to make bracelets, pins and earrings. These were quite unique to the Macefield look. Some of the C-Clamp style Bracelets would have eight or more pieces soldered together. The majority of these pieces were in 14k gold.

I always wondered why they chose to stay in Winchester, knowing that they would have had a much more extensive clientele in Boston, but they said "they never had any ambitions to do so." They liked the idea that each customer was treated as a friend and they felt that if they became too large they would lose some of their artistic creativity along with the personal time spent with their customers. Len would spend up to an hour or more with each customer to get a feeling of what they wanted, however, when too much time was being spent with a particular customer, Bill would come out from the back room to accommodate Len.



In all the years, I cannot think of anytime in which the Macefield shop was closed for business due to illness. Bill and Len became my mentors in life, work and ethics, showing me the importance of being honest to yourself and your customers at all costs.

During the early 1980s, when they were planning for their partial retirement on their out-of-state farm, the pieces made by them still had all the Macefield markings as well as their usual design quality. Bill never became tired of the charcoal casting technique for he felt the pieces took on the look of antiquity.

Macefield
Sterling silver cross pendant

The greatest gift they gave me was their trust and, around 1985, their shop location in Winchester. At this time I took on an apprentice, Beth O'Shaughnessy, who later became a master jeweler/designer in Boston. My name was used for the shop and on my creations which were marked "HARV," and I also continued to sell what was left of Macefield inventory.

I met my wife Margot in Boston and a few years later moved to Vero Beach, Florida where I opened a Gallery specializing in unique gold and silver designs.

During Bill and Len's semi-retirement, until the mid-1990s, they created pieces for me using the Macefield name.



Kornicks/Macefield sterling jewelry



*Macefield
Sterling silver and turquoise pin*

I valued their gift of love, trust, respect and, in return for all they have given me, I named my first child, Natalie Macefield Kornicks.

Harvey Kornicks

Harvey Kornicks received his B.A. in Art Education from the University of Florida in 1971. Though he specialized in printmaking he spent his weekends at the student union creating copper and enamel jewelry. It was after graduation that Harvey met William Mason and Leonard Field, capturing their attention with his sterling silver "Flying Saucer" necklace. From then on, Harvey would go to the Macefield shop every day after teaching school to create his own jewelry in their studio.



Harvey Kornicks gold bracelet

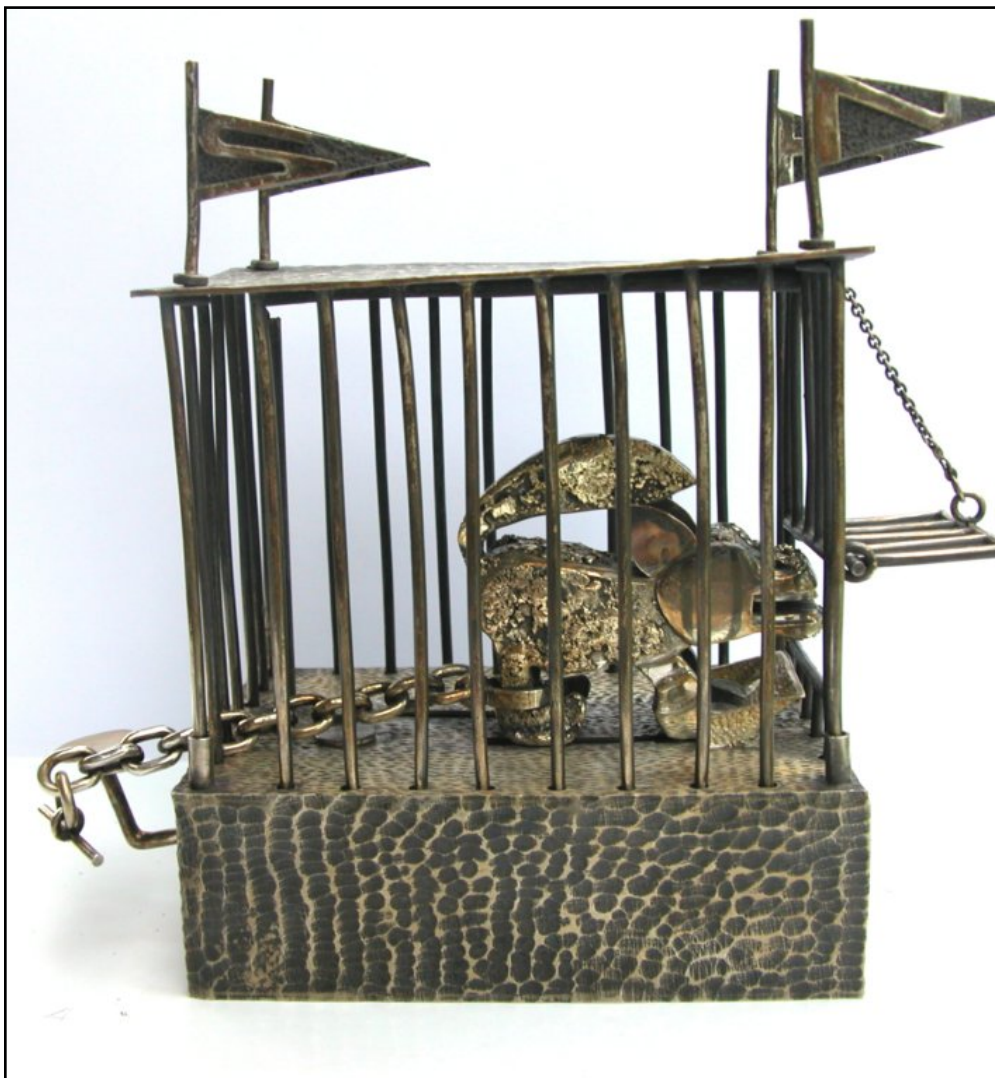
Once he felt comfortable Harvey began exhibiting at local craft shows where he won numerous awards and soon developed his own clientele. In the 1970s and early 1980s he showed at the Society of Arts and Crafts in Boston on Newbury Street.

From Bill and Len, Harvey learned to design and create "art jewelry" that was also functional and practical. During the mid 1980s, when Bill and Len went into semi-retirement, he took over the Macefield location, changing the name to "Harvey Kornicks Creations" where he sold his own jewelry and some of the Macefield inventory.



*Harvy Kornicks
mixed metals pin*

In 1987 Harvey moved to Florida, to Vero Beach where, for three years, he ran an art gallery in which he sold his unique jewelry creations as well as works of art by contemporary potters and painters.



Harvey Kornicks
Money keeper

At the present time, Harvey Kornicks is Art Director for Indian River Charter High School in Vero Beach, Florida where, as of this year, he has begun offering jewelry classes. He is proud of this program; one of his students received a \$75,000. scholarship to go to the Savannah School for the Arts, with a specialty in jewelry.



Harvey Kornicks
Gold and silver box

Harvey says that he still makes jewelry though not as often as he would like. He remembers the "ABCs" of Bill's and Len's wisdom about not making excuses for anything you do in life and that the customer is there for us to serve.

His daughter, Natalie Macefield Kornicks, is named after Bill and Len as a special thank you to them for trusting and respecting him and for giving him an understanding of who he was.

Mark Allen

Mark Allen met Leonard Field and Bill Mason when he was a teenager. Bill Mason was teaching at the Cambridge Adult Center (Cambridge, MA) and Leonard Field helped Mark to put together a portfolio in order to apply at the Boston Museum School.



*Mark Allen
Pendant*

Pierced sterling silver with sterling hoop

Before that, at age fifteen, Mark studied engraving with a black jeweler named Paul Ravelion at Harvard Square.. Mark said that Mr. Ravelion was an excellent engraver and teacher, but that he lacked opportunities to advance because of his color.

Mark began his studies at the Boston Museum School in the early 1950s. His jewelry teacher was Joseph Sharirock and his sculpture instructor was Peter Abate. During his time there he also worked as a silversmith for Bill Mason and Len Field at Macefield. Their first shop was at 10 Winchester Place in Winchester, Massachusetts and their second shop was in the same building, but in a different location.



Boston Museum School in the 1950s

Mark Allen is in the plaid shirt bottom right and Phyllis Allen is directly above him in the photograph.



Mark Allen

Pendant

14k yellow gold, Morrisonite, ruby

Hand-knotted chain has jade, garnet, pearls

All the jewelry at Macefield was handmade and one-of-a-kind. No casting was used to produce the jewelry. Mark was one of about three jewelers who worked for Macefield--his wife Phyllis also worked for Macefield for a short period of time. Mark said that he was able to make a living at that time by custom engraving work for retailers. While working for Macfield, Mark Allen's jewelry carried only their mark.



*Mark Allen
Pendant
Nantucket beach stone pendant
Sterling silver, gold beads
Collection of Phyllis Allen*

Mark believes that it is very important for a jeweler to be well trained and that many contemporary jewelers have not had the extensive training that he had. He believes that the gravure is one of the most important tools to learn to use well.

Mr. Allen continues to make jewelry under his own name and for retailers. He says that he does not think of jewelry as an art form, but as a craft--it was a way to make a living. He is also a sculptor who works in marble, but he does not sell that work.



Mark Allen

Ring

*14kt yellow gold, blue sapphire,
diamond*

Collection of Marbeth Schon

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