Dwight King: On the Cutting Edge

Dwight King, head research librarian at the Knapp Law Library of the Notre Dame Law School, has a reputation for being on the cutting edge in his profession. During the day, he coordinates the five-year Legal Research class, helps faculty and students conduct their own research—which could range from studying the latest Supreme Court decision on a particular topic all the way to in-depth research on adversary law—and engages in his own research and scholarship to ensure that the Knapp Law Library continues its climb into the nation's top 10 libraries.

But "after hours," all that changes. When not teaching his class of his young family—he and wife Mary have four children: Alice, Matthew, Gabriel, and Madeline—or coaching a young soccer player on the fine art of blocking, or perfecting his own skills as a black belt in judo, or taking a long bike ride, Dwight King sits down at a table in his family room, picks up a carving tool, and transforms a rough piece of balsam wood into a work of art.

"I started wood-carving when I was about 23 years old," says Dwight. "My grandfather and I decided to carve a..."
Derringer out of an old piece of pipe. Although he didn’t pick up another carving tool until he was in college, Dwight has always had a love of the art. “I was particularly interested in sculpture,” Dwight recalls. “While in college, I worked on wood as a way to reduce stress. It was wonderful to be able to find a release.”

Dwight studied sculpture at the University of Michigan for five years—a B.A. in 1977, a J.D. in 1980, and an M.L.S. in 1981. “And in college, I was struggling with the idea of what to do after I graduated. I was thinking about going to law school, but I wasn’t sure.” Dwight decided to focus on sculpture, and he has never looked back. Today, Dwight is a full-time sculptor, creating pieces that often feature animals and birds. “I love the challenge of capturing the essence of a living creature in stone,” Dwight says. “It’s a great way to express my passion for nature.”

Dwight is known for his attention to detail and his ability to transform simple objects into intricate works of art. “I try to capture the essence of what I’m carving, whether it’s an elephant or a bird,” Dwight explains. “I want my pieces to be as realistic as possible.”

Dwight’s artwork often includes elements of humor and whimsy. “I like to incorporate a little bit of fun into my work,” Dwight says. “I want my pieces to bring a smile to people’s faces.”

Dwight’s carving techniques are as unique as his artwork. “I use a variety of tools, from small chisels to large mallets,” Dwight says. “It’s a combination of precision and force that I use to shape my pieces.”

Dwight is proud of his work and is always looking for ways to improve. “I’m constantly learning and growing as an artist,” Dwight says. “I’m always trying to find new ways to express myself through my art.”

Dwight’s art has been exhibited in galleries around the world, and his pieces are beloved by collectors and art lovers alike. “I’m grateful for the opportunity to share my art with others,” Dwight says. “It’s a way to connect with people and to bring joy to their lives.”

Dwight’s carving journey has been filled with challenges and successes. “There have been times when I’ve felt discouraged, but I’ve never given up,” Dwight says. “I keep pushing forward, and I’m glad I did.”

Dwight is excited about the future of his art. “I’m looking forward to creating new pieces and sharing them with the world,” Dwight says. “I’m excited about the possibilities.”

Dwight’s journey is an inspiration to anyone pursuing their passion. “If you have a dream, follow it,” Dwight says. “Don’t let anything stand in your way.”

Dwight’s artwork is a testament to his dedication and talent. He is a true artist, and his work will continue to bring joy to people for generations to come.