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# Singing Lois' Praises



## Lois Curtis

Born in Atlanta, Georgia, Ms. Curtis spent her adolescent and adult life as a resident in various state-run institutions. After her repeated requests to be allowed to live in the community were denied, Ms. Curtis sued the state of Georgia. In 1999, her case came before the U.S. Supreme Court. Victorious, the landmark decision declared “unnecessary institutionalization amounts to segregation and is a violation of individual civil rights under the Americans with Disabilities Act.” Ms. Curtis’ case became a national mandate to free tens of thousands of people with disabilities from unnecessary and unjust institutionalization.

Today, Ms. Curtis receives community-based supports and enjoys life outside the institution. The recognition that she has received for her incredible talent, in conjunction with her passion, has motivated her to make art and advocacy her life’s work. Her work, done in pastels and acrylics, is simple, yet bold, and captures intense feeling and emotion. Her presentations are heartfelt, enlightening, and inspiring.

Lois Curtis’ presentation for our Disability Navigators from throughout the state was outstanding! Her story and artwork make us all aware that everyone has a dream and a contribution to make.

— *Michael L. Thurmond*  
*Commissioner, Georgia Department of Labor*

Lois has taught me a great deal about courage, good spirits in the face of adversity, how to smile when things are not necessarily going well. She has, I think, a remarkable insight into people which she expresses through her smile and her loyalty, not wasting energy on too many words. I think perhaps that is one of the wonderful things about her art — catching the essence as Lois sees it.

— *Sue Jamieson, Atlanta Legal Aid*

We’re proud to have Lois Curtis’ studio in the city of Pine Lake. She has become a part of the community both for her joyful personality and her poignant artwork.

— *Greg Zarus, Mayor, Pine Lake, GA*



October is National Arts and Humanities Month... It is with that in mind that the invitation to Lois Curtis to have her art work presented during this arts forum was extended... What better way to celebrate and acknowledge the way that the Arts affect and can influence our quality of life.

— *Jerry G. White, Senator Gloria Butler’s Advisory Council, Actor/Performer*

I just wanted you to know how much our class appreciated Lois’ visit. We so enjoyed her presentation and especially her drawings. The students were so amazed at the courage Lois has. It really made each one of them stop and think about the obstacles she has had to overcome. Students responded after her visit with a positive insight with discussions on how we all face obstacles daily; therefore, we need to constantly work towards overcoming the obstacles in our life with a positive attitude.

Lois really set the stage for our class to go out and be the best they can be. Thanks for taking the time to share her story and her talents with our class.

— *Nancy Chrisman*  
*Shiloh High School 12th Grade Teacher*