

# She opts for happiness in her art

**D**eborah Cavanaugh's creativity draws others to her canvases, where the viewer discovers much more than meets the eye. "I have my own personal style that comes from just sitting down everyday and painting...It's the time when I have the most faith..." she says, regarding her colorful patterned work. "That's how life is, you know. It's a whole lot of patterns that lay on top of each other and, somehow, it all works out in a beautiful way."

Cavanaugh first came to Wilmington while going through a divorce "I ...was only going to stay for a year," she says. "I brought two young children...and they made a remarkable transition."

In fact, she credits her youngsters for her foray into art. On Mother's Day 14 years ago, she explains, her third-grade son presented a gift that launched her career. "I believed I was going to get one of those little metal potholder frames," she recalls. "Instead, I got a student set of water colors and a pad of paper."

Wanting something distinctly her own to adorn her home, she had taken some work for framing at a local gallery, when the owner approached her. "She said, 'If you can part with them, I can sell them,'" Cavanaugh recalls.

Six months later, her career was in full bloom. And despite her crammed schedule, she strikes a balance between work and being available for her children.

Cavanaugh produces four shows a year, gallery displays, commission work, books, a print line and a card line. The phrases on her canvases and the essays she composes proclaim her philosophy. "On the worst day of your life, you can easily list everything that is going wrong," she says, simply. "But you can never get to the end, even on the worst day, of all the things that are going right ..."

Cavanaugh also strives to make her



work inclusive, with a true emotional connection. "Music is for everyone. Literature is for everyone. But fine art is held exclusively in the hands of a few people...I want to do art that opens up, invites you in... I want to be of service." ▼▼

**Local artist Deborah Cavanaugh has earned recognition in the field of fine art. Yet, at the same time, she manages a thriving business that employs her talents as both a painter and a writer.**

~ Susan Hance