

Why Frankoma-?

THE FRANKOMA STORY

FRANKOMA POTTERY has rightfully earned its position as America's outstanding creators of "useful and beautiful" earthenware. The colors, textures and crafted designs are created at Frankoma, and are unique in American ceramics. Frankoma entered the field of ceramics in 1933, utilizing the heritage left it by its predecessors, the Southwest Indians. Our aim was to combine the traditional art of the Indians, the spirit of the American Pioneer and the creative tendencies of the youth of the Great Southwest, and mold them into good pottery forms.

John Frank, originator of "Frankoma," came to Oklahoma from Chicago in 1927. His teaching Art and Pottery at the University of Oklahoma and his work with the geological survey - unearthing the Oklahoma clay deposits - brought together valuable material for his future venture of "potting." In 1933 he started a "studio" pottery in Norman, Oklahoma, - equipped with one small kiln, a butter churn for mixing clay, a fruit jar for grinding glazes and a few other crude tools and tables. It was necessary to continue teaching until enough ware was produced to prove that a product could be made of Oklahoma clays that was a contribution to Art and Ceramics and still salable. Resigning his teaching in 1936 he and his wife, Grace Lee, working side by side, set out on a venture of creating beautiful pottery for every day living. They felt the need of using Oklahoma clays for Oklahoma's first pottery. First a clay from Ada was used, then in 1954 a red burning clay dug at Sapulpa became the basis for all Frankoma ware. In 1938 the "studio" grew into a small factory as it moved from Norman to Sapulpa, where it is now. (Original plant 5,500 square feet; through the years it has grown to the existing 79,000 square feet.)

Frankoma demanded of itself to make as fine a pottery as could be made considering the limitations of its materials. This means constant research to take advantage of raw materials and processes as they are brought to light.

Pottery enjoys so many advantages over the more "refined" and delicate ceramic wares. Frankoma Pottery is manufactured by its unique once-fired process - clay body and colored glaze are fused and fired at the maturing point of the clay, and tempered as it slowly cools. It can be used "indoors-outdoors" because of its ruggedness and durability. It can really "take" the handling of every day use. It can be used in a dishwasher. It is also ovenproof and food can be served in the same dish in which it is baked or prepared. It also keeps foods and drinks hot much longer. Color is such an indispensable part of today's decor, and Frankoma creates an exciting wide range of colors and textures. Our "Rutile Art Glazes" which have identified Frankoma's unique tableware around the world have successfully been produced only on our colored earthenware clay. The first to introduce colored din-

Grace Lee and The Late John Frank exemplify true American determination and the Free Enterprise System. They started with only a dream, and through hard work created one of America's most unique potteries recognized the world over. 1971 they were named, "National Small Businessman of the Year" and personally recognized by the President of the United States for their accomplishments.



Grace Lee and The Late John Frank (pictured January 1973)

nerware on the market in the 1940's was one of the basic reasons John Frank was presented the award "1972 Marketing Man of the Year."

Mr. Frank passed away November 10, 1973. Grace Lee, although semi-retired still contributes to Frankoma's designs and policies.

The Business continued after Mr. Franks death under the leadership of their daughter Joniece Frank and a trained, dedicated staff.

In 1979 Joniece was joined by her husband Duane Nelson. And now, Frankoma is once again being guided by a highly successful and creative husband and wife team, dedicated to perpetuating the tradition and ideals of those who pioneered the business half a century ago.



Duane and Joniece Frank-Nelson



For the first time in our history, we will reissue a collector vase. Due to popular request, V14 Vase is being issued lettered "Second Edition" on the bottom, and not numbered. The number will be V14-2.