Lafayette native Siadous continues artistic legacy

by Ashley Coussou

She calls herself "red," one of her daughters calls her "vivacious," her son calls her an inspiration, and to the general public, she is commonly known as "Brent's mom," but she is certainly no paint by number.

Gae Siadous, a multi-faceted artist and owner of Watercolors studio and gallery in Lafayette, opens herself up to the world and brings home all those who are lost. She is the generous, who gives her artwork to strangers; the genuine, who wants nothing in return; and the gracious, who sees a reason for everything.

Every piece of art she creates has a story, and every stroke has a purpose, which is why some people who know her consider her a "true" artist. Her intention is to teach. She paints themed step stools to teach toddlers how to talk and to count; each stool has a different story. She has spent ample time studying history to preserve Cajun history through her clay, finger puppets, and studying World War II fashions to portray her figures in proper attire.

Of all her artwork, Siadous is best known for the Belle series. All of her Belles wear indigo skirts with white petticoats showing. Siadous said Maison Blanche bought the entire Belle gallery and sent her to Florida, where she sold all of her minor pieces, to travel with a group of Louisiana artists.

"A woman is like a diamond," Siadous compared. "She has many facets; it just depends on which one you shine the light on."

She paints only female figures, and she said every woman has a little bit of each of her Belles in her. She has painted Belles with such identities as: the harvester, the "tomboy" and the seductress.

"I learned visual art has its season; in time, this (Belles) will again become vogue," she theorized.

She said she realized she had a "unique ability" at age 35. Eventually, she taught herself all the media. She said she would go to the library, buy books on art, study and produce. First, she learned acrylic. Then oils, pastels, china painting, sculpting...the list goes on...and, finally, watercolors, the most difficult of all.

"You name it, and I do it," Siadous quipped.

She said she was most productive when her children were in high school and she was a stay-at-home mom, from 1977 to 1987. This ambitious, over-achieving artist even spent one year studying paper.

"I ordered one sheet of every paper that was available to the artist in America. I learned what to do with it, what I couldn't do with it and how to do it. Now, I call myself a paper expert," she recalled.

In the process of Siadous' next project, painting with thread, she said she learned something about herself.

"Where it came to learning something on the right side of my brain, I didn't need many lessons," she said. "I was a visual learner, and where it came to creativity, all I needed were the necessary materials and a book, and I could do it."

Siadous' first design was her own wedding band and engagement ring that she...
Gae Siadous uses watercolors to paint the portrait of a young girl.  
(BNP/Ashley Coussou Photo)

The artist uses several mediums to depict the passion she feels for her family and home.  
(BNP/Ashley Coussou Photo)