

A brightly shining star

From miniature beginnings, Bright Star Promotions, Inc. are now sparkling in the teddy bear galaxy

By Carrie Brooks

School was closed due to a snow storm in the late 1970s and my children wanted something to do," recalled Valerie Rogers, President of Bright Star Promotions, Inc., Louisville, Kentucky USA.

"My daughter's friend came over to play and I set them all down to create things from Fimo clay. Since my daughter's friend had a dollhouse, the kids seemed to migrate towards making miniature sized foods and toys." The clay was then baked and the painting began.

Time seemed to slip away when knocking was heard on the front door. "It is time to come home for dinner," the neighbour told his daughter. She gathered up her creations as her father marveled at the array of miniatures the

children made.

And so it all began. . .

"One thing led to another and my children and I secured a table in a Lexington miniatures show." In the 1970s there were only a handful of miniatures shows around the country.

"We were amazed at what we experienced while at the show. The artists were so friendly and helpful. We wanted to be part of it all," Valerie continued.

Making inventory was the main concern and by the time another show opened they were ready. Throughout the shows, Valerie noticed many things that could be offered to the exhibitors; mainly some true Southern Hospitality. Joining with several other artists, they laid plans to open a miniature show in Louisville 1981.



"As the saying goes; the rest is history," she began. Over time, Valerie went into business for herself and incorporated Bright Star Promotions. "How we came up with that name; well, that's another story!"

Producing 40 miniatures shows a year while raising her two children kept her quite busy. "The kids were becoming teenagers by then and their desire to create miniatures or sell them at the shows waned. It was at that point that I focused on only producing shows."

Though wanting to expand her business, it hardly seemed possible to be on the road with more miniature shows. "An idea was presented to me, in the late 1980s, to sponsor teddy bear shows," she recalled. Although she didn't have any experience with teddy bears, she did have the number one, most vital aspect necessary in the bear industry; "I have always loved teddy bears!" she exclaimed.

So it would follow that on many

ABOVE: The red "Ruby" teddy bear - a special one that GBW often gifts to those in need of a hug.

LEFT: Many of the URSA Awards Winners also participate in the teddy bear shows. 2012 Valerie introduces 3 of the URSA winners - Lin Chamberlain, Jacquie Pollitt, and Jan Cuming, traveling from New Zealand.

