Richard "Dick" Hepner '60's love of horses began in 1939 when, at 2 years old, he was photographed perched atop one of his dad's draft horses in the days before tractors were acquired for the family farm. He enjoyed a rich and full life, including service in the U.S. Army and a 37-year career with Exxon. The completion of Bandit, a full-size, hand-carved carousel horse, brings to reality a longstanding retirement dream. Dick's son Scott captured the process in a collage-style video that features 100+ still photos taken over the course of the 17-year project, also documenting an art form that has nearly become lost to history.

How to Fulfill a Lifelong Dream (and Hand-Carve a Customized Wooden Carousel Horse in Just 17 Years)

by Richard Hepner '60

1. Conduct extensive research on how wooden carousel horses were created by 19th-century master carvers.

2. Collect a pile of basswood lumber in the back of the family SUV and begin by constructing a hollow, rectangular box for the torso (referred to as "the coffin method" of construction).

3. Create full-size anatomical pattern parts, copy them onto two-dimensional planks and cut them out on a band saw.

4. Use five dozen clamps to laminate about 65 separate pieces of wood to create the material necessary to carve the third dimension.

5. Take frequent pauses to learn new woodworking skills and techniques along the way.

6. Partially carve the legs, head, neck and tail the old-fashioned way—using gouges and a mallet—and attach to the torso, blending each before perfecting the details.

7. Apply four coats of acrylic gesso primer, then customize the animal's features with three vibrant coats of acrylic color paints, faux jewels and gold-trimmed accessories for glitz.

8. Keep track of all 637 production hours in a carving journal as provenance for posterity.

9. Sit back and admire the 55" long, 58.75" high and 11.5" wide completed sculpture (which weighs about 225 lbs.). Name him Bandit and place him in the foyer.

10. Take satisfaction in the knowledge that a piece of "yesteryear know-how" has been resurrected and passed on to the next generation.

▶ **View the video of Bandit's construction at Dickinson.edu/magazine.**

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