

Mishmish is the Arabic word for apricot

It is also the name of the well-loved art supply store which served Blacksburg for 49 years. It was certainly a name that stuck in our heads, even as we often shortened it as in “I’m going to Mish.”

Using the fuzzy round fruit’s name as a kicking off point, let me give you this:

A - is for always open. Steve and Debbie did not set hours to suit themselves, they set hours to suit the students they were there to serve and the rest of us benefitted from it. Even as they were closing the doors, there seemed to be many last days as the percentage of reductions dropped to 90% day after day after one more last day.

P - is for patient. Steve always had that smile on his face, a pleasant demeanor and a plethora of plentiful, perfect stuff to meet every artistic need.

R - is for returning. Customers always returned, especially in the midst of crisis when halfway through a project. Mish Mish was just minutes away and full of personal service to help customers get exactly what they needed without waiting for Amazon to deliver.

I - is for independent. It is tough to be independent in the world of bigger and bigger art supply chain stores, but Steve, Debbie and the terrific staff kept on going for 49 years of appreciating what “their” artists accomplished and proved it by displaying their work in the shop’s little gallery.

C - is for caring. They cared about the artists, young and not so; professional and striving; 2D and 3D, metal and paper and photographic and pencil and everything in between.

O - is for outstanding. That says it all.

T - is for thank you from all the artists who ever walked in your door. T is for time. It is time to end this Apricot store that fed the appetites and visions of hundreds of artists throughout the years. It is time to go in search of new adventures at home or away, pursuits artistic or otherwise. A time to remember in every piece of art produced by Mish Mish customers, there is a piece of Steve and Debbie and Jen and Mary and every student that ever worked behind that big central check out desk...and the biggest piece was always belief. Belief we could all do wonderful art with just a little help from our friends in the unforgettable art store named after an apricot.

Your spirits will long remain in Blacksburg and beyond in the DNA of every piece of art nourished by the place called Mish Mish. You will be missed!

***Presented September 5, 2019
From the artists of the Blacksburg Regional Art Association***

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