



Frisco artist **Barbara Mason** displays some of her unique cards. Profile photo

Ultrasound audio cards and French-inspired art make ideal gifts for Mother's Day

said Barbara. "And I've had guys purchase the card to surprise their grandfathers saying, 'I am having a son and the name is going to carry on.'" She continued, "Some parents even record a little message before the heartbeat, like 'This was the first time we fell in love with you.' Then, they'll give the card to the child later in life."

The possibilities do seem endless. In fact, Barbara was most surprised when an art collector in her 60s expressed interest in a card. "Oh, is someone in your family expecting?" Barbara asked the woman. She responded, "I had open heart surgery and would've bought a card to record my heartbeat. Then I could have heard the old me and the new me."

"Wow!" exclaims Barbara, reflecting on the moment.

Barbara was card shopping with her daughter Christian when she proposed the idea for an ultrasound card. "You know, it would be really nice if you could hear a heartbeat and surprise the husband that way," she told her daughter.

But the surprise was on Barbara. She rushed home to research the idea, and there was nothing out there like it. "I thought, This is an opportunity! So I researched sound chips and patents, and then I started producing the artwork, and it took off."

The whole experience has been bittersweet. Not every pregnancy is a successful one, and being a mom of two, Barbara can sympathize for these patients. She shares that the cards have been "rewarding" in these sad situations. "One mom who lost her baby told me it helped her in the grieving process," said Barbara. "She will always have that heartbeat to hold on to."

FRISCO RESIDENT AND ARTIST **Barbara Mason** says of her unique ultrasound cards, "The possibilities are endless. You can be as creative as you want."

Barbara is an ultrasound specialist who, after watching her patients' faces light up at the sound of their child's heartbeat, invented **N Due Season** greeting cards. The cards record a baby's heartbeat and include a placeholder for a photo.

The more buzz they create, the more Barbara is discovering how very useful they are. "Of course, there's those parents who are starting to plan a family, and when the mom finds out she's pregnant, she buys a card to surprise her husband at dinner. That's always exciting,"

a heartbeat for all to hear

The entire business venture has been rewarding as it undoubtedly has unleashed Barbara's creative side. After discovering her gift and passion for painting in 1997 thanks to some watercolor classes—and a little pushing from her husband James—Barbara began exhibiting her work across the country. Her first show, the National Black Arts Festival



in Atlanta, Georgia, proved that her style was unique and her art worth collecting.

She has become known as a “master watercolorist,” although she works in various

media, including pastel and clay. Barbara's most popular N Due Season design is her yellow “Spring Blossom” collection (pictured second from the left.) “Flowers add a feminine touch, and I wanted the design to be nonspecific for any ethnic group,” she shares. “I also have ‘Our Flock’ that has to do with building your home and nesting, and then ‘Winged Royalty,’ which includes birds, butterflies...things that cocoon or nestle. Eventually, we will go more into abstract art for nontraditional families, parents who adopt or for surrogate mothers. I'm creating different designs to speak to the whole parenting process.”

Barbara worked with a trademark attorney to claim the name N Due Season, and it is no accident that the attorney was a woman. “I'm all about women in business and empowering women,” said Barbara. “My Web designer is a female, my writer is a female...women power all the way!”

Barbara secured a provisional patent, and come June will resubmit for a full, international patent. “I wanted to give it a year's time to see how sales would go and to raise money for the full patent.” She added, “Getting all the legalities in place for the cards is much harder than designing and writing the cards. I think that's what deters a lot of people from pursuing their passion—the business side of it.”

But not Barbara. She capitalized on her passion. She's not only created N Due Season greeting cards, she's also published numerous books featuring her paintings. This year, she is expanding the N Due Season brand to include calendars, note cards and stationery. Barbara birthed forth an idea, nurtured it, and is now watching it grow. “I've always stressed to my daughter to follow your passion,” she said. “It's what balances us in life.”

N Due Season greeting cards are \$10 each, or three for \$24, and are available at nduseason.com.

DMA gift shop spotlights Plano artists' work

The **Dallas Museum of Art** purchased Plano artists **Tommy and Darrellene Lindsey's** 13-inch chargers and coasters for its gift shop in conjunction with the exhibit *The Lens of Impressionism: Photography and Painting Along the Normandy Coast, 1850–1874* going on now through Sunday, May 23.

French art has always been a favorite for this couple since their engagement in Paris. When their 10-year anniversary rolled around, they were searching for a unique piece of art to reflect their love of France—and each other—and Tommy thought of hand-painting and personalizing a replica of a vintage French cheese label with an Eiffel Tower design.

In 2008, the couple founded **Darrellene Designs**, which specializes in art inspired by vintage French cheese labels. Their products include wall decor, Lazy Susans, chargers, and coasters. To see their work in Plano, head to Culinary Connection at The Shops at Legacy for a trunk show on Saturday, May 29. Visit cheeselabelart.com.

Plano artist **Darrellene Lindsey** with an example of her French-cheese-label inspired art.

Photo/Ruel Felipe

