Gail Rule-Hoffman  
Program Director, Art Therapy and Counseling Department

Picasso, DiVinci, Monet. These are the names that probably come to mind when you hear the word “art.” But there is more to art than famous paintings or aesthetic response. Gail Rule-Hoffman will tell you that one of the greatest aspects of art is its therapeutic qualities. As Program Director of the Art Therapy and Counseling department at Ursuline College, Gail is involved in virtually every aspect of the program, including student recruitment and curriculum development. In addition to her many responsibilities as program director, she also serves as professor, having taught a wide range of classes including Media and Techniques, Thesis, Practicum, Studio and Women’s Issues.

A native of the Upper-Peninsula of Michigan, Gail graduated from Northern Michigan University with a BFA concentrating in pottery and clay work. Originally planning a career as an artist, she had a revelation while still a student. “It was my turn to stay up all night and watch the kiln and it suddenly occurred to me ‘How is this pot going to help someone?’ and I realized then that I could do more to help others outside of the studio.” Ironically, fate stepped in during Gail’s last week of school prior to graduation when a book on art therapy literally fell of the shelf while she was in the library, and she knew this was the path she was meant to follow.

In 1976, she moved to Ohio to attend the Art Psychotherapy Institute of Cleveland, and later completed a Master’s in Community Agency Counseling at Cleveland State University. Gail’s career has taken her many places prior to her work at Ursuline. She has worked with many types of clients, including those with psychiatric disorders, addictions and domestic violence, to name a few. She finds that combining art therapy and counseling skills has many benefits that cannot always be realized with conventional therapies. “The expressive arts allow people to express feelings that can be difficult to put into words. It can help us to understand problems and issues, and allow clients to see themselves more clearly.”

Gail says she was drawn to Ursuline for several reasons; “I loved the environment at Ursuline, from its physical setting, spiritual foundations, size, philosophy, and the colleagueship.” She has been teaching in the program since it’s inception in 1986. Gail is active in several professional organizations including the American Art Therapy Association, American Counseling Association, Association for Creativity in Counseling, Ohio Counseling Association, and she has served as past president of the Buckeye Art Therapy Association of which she has been made an honorary lifetime member. At a recent American Art Therapy Association Conference held in Cleveland, she and other art therapists and students made and sold 2,800 ceramic beads to raise money for Habitat for Humanity.

When she's not teaching or perfecting her craft, Gail likes to visit her native Michigan, especially Lake Superior, where her family has a cottage on a nearby lake that she helped her father build when she was a child. True to her northern roots, Gail enjoys skiing and actually looks forward to winter when most of us are cringing at the thought of it. As an artist with a background in ceramics, Gail continues to experiment with new media, most recently with photography, silk painting and wood bowl turning.
When asked who has been most influential in her life, Gail cites the artist, poet, educator and author M.C. Richards whose book *Centering in Pottery, Poetry and Person* has been a great source of inspiration to her. “It helped me to realize that art is not about the final product, but rather about who we are and who we may become”.

**FAVORITES:**
- **Song/music genre:** Many different types; oldies, rock, new age, classical, chants
- **Color:** the whole rainbow but especially periwinkle
- **Vacation Spot:** Upper Peninsula of Northern Michigan
- **Holiday:** Thanksgiving
- **Season:** Fall
- **Food:** Ice Cream
- **Quote:** “You must be the change you wish to see in the world.” - Ghandi
- **Book/Author:** It varies...so many good authors out there!
- **T.V. Show:** None at the moment
- **Animal:** Cat