



DENNIS PRIDDY THE KEELER SOCIETY 2024

A consistent competitor in both line and primitive matches, Dennis Priddy, the 2024 inductee into the Spirit of Roy Keeler Society, is also known as a premier builder of black powder arms. And beyond introducing his children and grandchildren, Dennis has ushered many first-time participants into the black powder shooting sports—shades of Roy “Pa” Keeler.

“There was a pawn shop where I got off the school bus. They had a French pistol on display,” Dennis said. “I saved my money and bought a CVA kit. I carved flowers in the wood, and I engraved the brass with a cold chisel. I didn’t understand the proper way. It was hideous, but I still have that pistol.”

Clyde Carr (2002) started Dennis shooting at Ionia, Michigan “using that pistol.” In 1973, Dennis began building muzzleloaders in earnest. That first longrifle was a .40-caliber, flintlock, iron-mounted, southern mountain rifle. As his craftsmanship grew, so did his reputation.

About 2011, he needed “a competition smoothbore,” so he set about crafting a 1750-era .28-gauge, American-walnut-stocked, French fowler with “simple architecture.” Simple evolved into ornate carvings, elegant engravings and silver-wire inlays. Known as “Dennis Priddy’s Fowler,” the arm was exhibited at ArtPrize® 2013, a world-class art competition held in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Over the years he has mentored many shooters and craftsmen, modified or repaired muzzleloaders to fit eager newcomers or built custom longrifles for old-timers. Dennis is an active, 50-year member of the Grand Valley Cap ‘n Ballers™, but he also shares his talents with other organizations. He is a regular demonstrator at the National Muzzle Loading Rifle Association’s Gunmaker’s Hall, the Kalamazoo Living History Show and displays his craftsmanship at the Contemporary Longrifle Association events.

Many of his rifles and fowlers have graced the covers of black powder magazines, along with feature stories detailing each creation. And he is quick to credit Roy Keeler for encouraging the development of his gun building skills. “Pa and I were pretty good friends,” he said. “He inspired so many young people. Being older and wiser, he had a way of knowing what we would do in the future.”

The Spirit of Roy Keeler Society is proud to welcome Dennis Priddy. Congratulations!