



**Jay Smith**

*Blown Glass Artisan*

I am a 1984 graduate of Fulton High School and 1989 graduate of the University of Missouri-Rolla, currently residing in the Kansas City metro. My love of art started early during the years of taking art classes in junior high and high school. Though traditional artists, my teachers encouraged me to explore, regardless of the artistic outcome. While in college, I continued to dabble in art, creating t-shirt designs, posters and banners while completing my engineering education. In my professional life, I work in the environmental field, living in the Kansas City metro, but also traveling extensively around the world for my work. Wherever I travel, I seek out the art of the region, especially the local glass artists.

My infatuation with glass began with cold glass, after a friend gave me a gift certificate for a class in stained glass making almost 25 years ago. After working in stained glass for a few years, I began exploring warm (fused) glass. But, I yearned for more dimensionality. So, increasing the heat a bit, I then explored torch worked glass beads. But the scale of torch work seemed too limiting. And then, about fourteen years ago, I attended my first intensive lesson in glass blowing at Third Degree Glass Factory in St. Louis, Missouri – and I was hooked! Since that time I have pursued blowing glass as much as my busy work schedule allows, learning under Gabe and Terry Bloodworth at Springfield Hot Glass for many years and attending additional workshops involving more advanced techniques, such as Venetian Glass Blowing with William Gudenrath at the Corning Museum of Glass. Along with one of my glass blowing friends, I currently have a hot shop that is situated on the shores of a large picturesque lake where we make our blown glass creations. I continue to have close ties to my hometown area of Fulton where I still have family and many friends.

