Teacher feature: Art exhibit highlights area instructors

A degree in photography from Lee College paved the way for M.J. Sadler to transition from a career in construction safety to a field she truly loved: teaching art to her own students at Chinquapin Preparatory School in Highlands.

Now, Sadler is one of more than a dozen local art teachers whose work will be on display through July 25 as part of a special summer exhibit at the college Performing Arts Center (PAC) gallery. Other featured artists include current and retired teachers from the Goose Creek Consolidated, Anahuac, Liberty and Hull-Daisetta independent school districts.

“We have a lot of talent in our area and I wanted to give them a chance to show their work,” said Jennifer Herzberg, a Lee College instructor of visual arts who devised and curated the exhibit.

The exhibit includes a wide range of artwork — from watercolors, pencil drawings and oil paintings, to ceramics, jewelry and sculpture fashioned from wood, metals and gemstones. Sadler’s pieces are enlarged chalk pastel drawings of an amaryllis and a plumeria flower reminiscent of Georgia O’Keefe and taken from her photographs.

“I love color, so a lot of my work involves bright, vibrant color,” said Sadler, a photographer for nearly 30 years who has never felt happier or more fulfilled than she does in her art classroom with her students. She has even found herself teaching them to also draw big and fill their pages.

“If I find something that catches my eye, that is what I create,” Sadler said. “My days as a student at Lee College are really happy memories; I found my inner artist while I was there. I was very surprised and honored to be asked to contribute to the show.”

The summer art exhibit at the PAC gallery is free and open to the public 8 a.m.-6 p.m., Monday through Thursday, and 8 a.m.-noon Friday. For more information, contact the Visual and Performing Arts Division at 281.425.6821.