

https://richmond.com/business/turning-point-pen-co-honors-lifes-special-moments-with-unique-handcrafted-pens/article_435bca94-9653-5f3c-a779-d595f9883faf.html

ALERT **TOP STORY**

Turning Point Pen Co. honors life's special moments with unique, handcrafted pens

Holly Prestidge

May 20, 2022

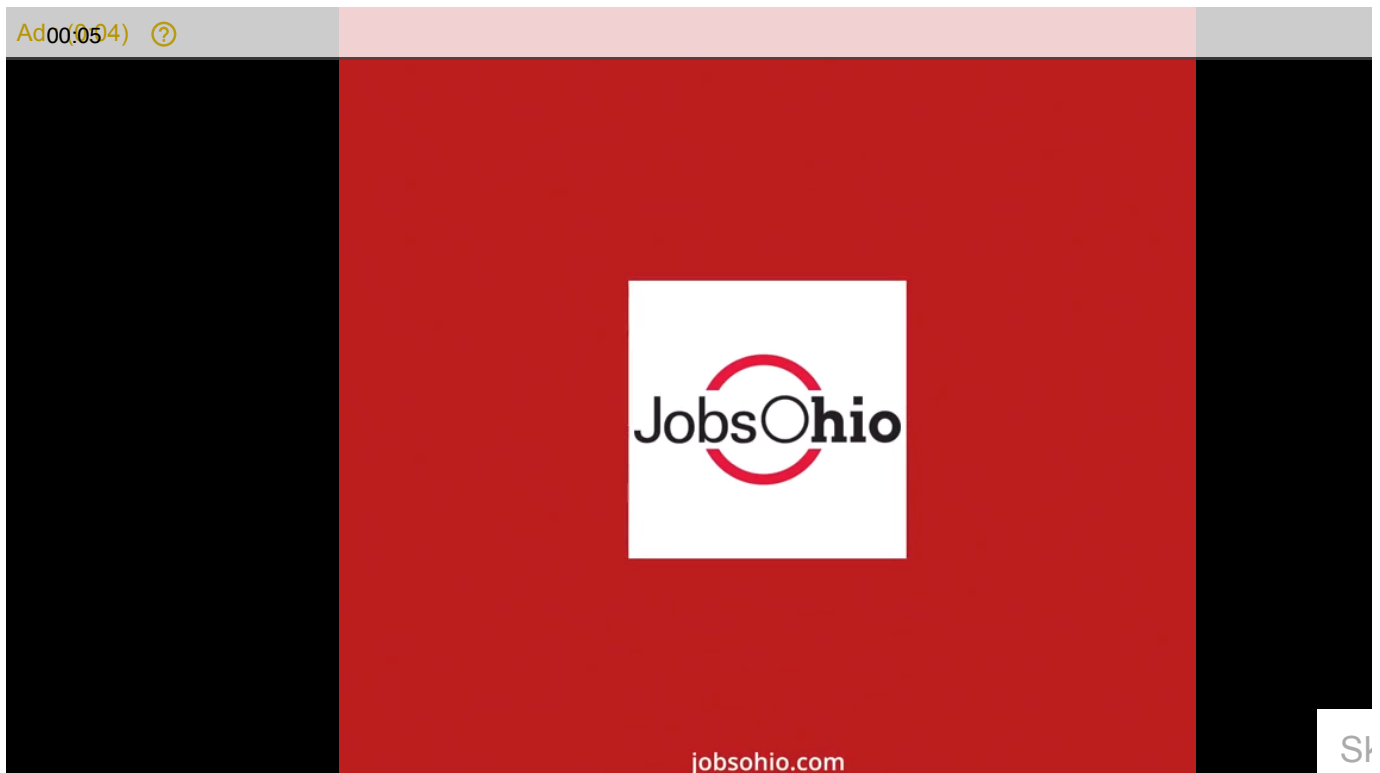


Turning Point Pen Co. creates custom-designed pens. Each handcrafted writing piece can be made up of more photos by Daniel Sangjib Min/TIMES-DISPATCH

Holly Prestidge

s renowned sculptor Kehinde Wiley celebrated with throngs of rain-soaked Richmonders at the unveiling of “Rumors of War” outside the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts in December 2019, inside the museum, Hanover County resident Michael Kahwajy-Hyland waited for an unveiling of a different sort.

Kahwajy-Hyland held a small case that contained a pen, one that had been meticulously and thoughtfully crafted for Wiley so that each part and piece was a reflection of the significance of what was happening outside.



A center band on the pen featured imported African horse hair, wrapped around sterling silver and cast in resin — a nod to the “Rumor” horse. The man on the horse wore Nike shoes, so the pen’s clip was created by taking a piece of a Nike shoelace and casting it in sterling silver.

Knowing that Wiley visited a number of Richmond’s historic African American sites for both inspiration and understanding, including places such as Lumpkin’s Jail, Kahwajy-Hyland also visited those sites. He gathered dirt and pieces of brick he found, which he incorporated into the pen’s body. A diamond element represented the future. Wood grains represented the past. Black, white and brown resins

represented the skin tones found on earth, while red resin — seen mostly when the pen was uncapped — represented the notion that all of humanity is the same on the inside.

People are also reading...

- 1 Federal jury finds Midlothian family guilty in scheme to keep Pakistan woman in forced labor for more than a dozen years**
 - 2 Doug Wilder accuses VCU provost of racism for not firing employee**
 - 3 Schapiro: Youngkin recasting bureaucracy in his own image**
 - 4 Island Shrimp Co. now open in Rocketts Landing, new cheese bar opening in Devil's Triangle**
-

It took four months to create, but it's a moment that'll live with Kahwajy-Hyland forever.

A turning point, indeed.

Kahwajy-Hyland is the owner and designer for Richmond-based Turning Point Pen Co., a custom luxury pen company that designs handcrafted writing instruments to commemorate significant moments or show deep gratitude. His pens — fountain, rollerball or ballpoint — offer customized celebratory gifts for personal and professional milestones, or convey deep appreciation and sentiment as legacy gifts and family heirlooms. He also creates pens for corporate gifting. His pens, which can have upwards of a dozen pieces as part of their construction, cost anywhere from \$600 to thousands, depending on the materials and craftsmanship needed.

“What Turning Point is, to me, is a message,” Kahwajy-Hyland, 29, said earlier this month. Spread before him were several of his creations. Each one has a unique story — a loved one's heritage, a military official's enduring love for his son — even plants and organic materials that represent hope and growth.

“Life is special [and] we have to be intentional about acknowledging what’s meaningful in our daily lives,” he said. “Having a piece like this — it’s an amazing way to keep those special moments alive in your mind every day.”

Turning Point’s earliest origins can be traced back to the night before his college graduation in 2015. A friend happened to mention that she and her parents wanted to find a unique way to commemorate her collegiate success. She mentioned a custom pen.

Kahwajy-Hyland said he first thought it was a weird concept and one he’d never heard of, but quickly told her that he could create something for her that would be unique and personal to her experience. Years before, while attending Chickahominy Middle School, Kahwajy-Hyland came to know and love the art of wood turning — a craft that uses a lathe to create shaped objects. Among his favorite pieces, even back then, were pens.

“The energy that that comment made was what spurred this business,” he said, referring to that off-hand comment about a custom pen for the graduation. He recalls that he thought to himself, ‘If I can create this kind of appreciation in life and energy in just a random friend, I can probably do this for other people.’”

Kahwajy-Hyland set out to create that pen — but also, to start a business. He was working several jobs after college, he said, but found time to focus on his pens. He began attending pen trade shows around the country. He sought advice from a small but supportive niche market of custom pen-makers, many of whom helped guide him through the process.

Eventually, he said, he realized he wanted to do that full time.

He settled on Turning Point as a name, for a number of reasons.

“Turning is the craft,” he said, but also, “our brand is focused around the special times in life — the turning points.”

“We want to make those special moments last and give people a really unique way and effective way to do that,” he added.

BK Fulton, founder, CEO and chairman of Souldifly, a Richmond-based full-feature media, film and stage company, has become an avid fan and client of Kahwajy-Hyland’s custom pens. Souldifly produces everything from Hollywood movies to Broadway stage productions and more. It’s latest movie — “A Day to Die” with Bruce Willis — came out in theaters in March.

Fulton is also an author. His latest book, “A Tale of the Tee: Be Kind and Just Believe” with co-author Jonathan Blank, looks at racial injustice in the aftermath of the summer of 2020 and the national unrest following the killing of George Floyd.

It’s how he met Kahwajy-Hyland, who Fulton commissioned originally not for pens, but for custom golf tees.

Kahwajy-Hyland obliged, creating two tees made from the jawbone of a donkey, with smoky elements in clear resin and white and yellow gold, symbolic nods to the coming together of his and Blank’s ethnicities in writing the book.

The tees include both men’s initials — but also stand for the “be kind and just believe” mantra found in their book, he said.

“There are only two in the world,” Fulton said of the tees, and “we carry [them] with us all the time as a reminder of the work left to be done.”

But Fulton said he was so enamored of the tees, he reached out to Kahwajy-Hyland to create pens for some of Souldifly’s executives. The rollerball pens feature splotches of Souldifly’s colors inside clear resin. The company logo is featured on a custom silver clip.

“When you get a Turning Point pen ... you’re getting something that nobody else has,” Fulton said. “You can’t get that by just buying off the rack.”

“I carry it, I write with it,” he continued, joking that only a very few people are allowed to hold it — briefly. “It’s a perfectly crafted writing instrument.”

Today, Kahwajy-Hyland is the pen designer for his company, which consists of him, another employee and a board member. He relies on craftsmen both locally and around the country to create the pens. There’s no retail store, rather customers begin their experience online and then talk with him about their ideas.

Kahwajy-Hyland also offers consulting services for small businesses in helping them craft messages and words to attract clientele. He’s a board member for RVA Works, an organization that provides resources for entrepreneurs and small business owners, particularly people of color.

His Lebanese roots from his mother’s family led him to Lebanese dancing, which he still enjoys.

The vision for Turning Point, Kahwajy-Hyland said, “is to make the biggest impact that we can.” He said he wants to start working with more mission-based and nonprofit organizations.

Regardless of the customer, each opportunity starts with the same questions: What’s the significance? What’s the meaning?, Kahwajy-Hyland said.

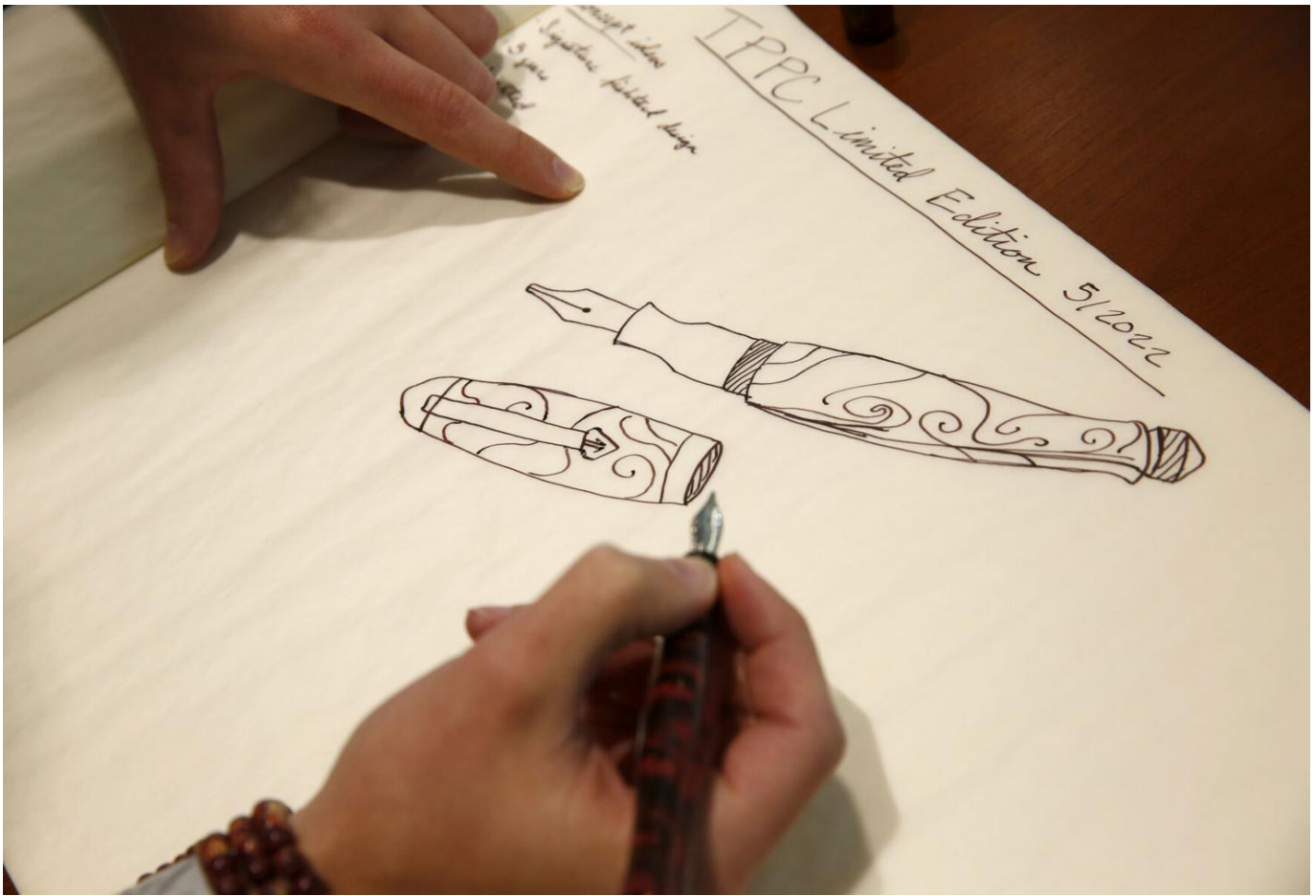
“That’s really what sets Turning Point apart,” he said. It’s honoring a life, an award, a momentous occasion in a very personal, tangible way “to last for generations.”

PHOTOS: Turning Point Pen Co.



Michael Kahwajy-Hyland, shown working on a design, creates fountain, rollerball and ballpoint pens for customized gifting through his company, Turning Point Pen Co.

Daniel Sangjib Min/TIMES-DISPATCH



Kahwajy-Hyland works on his design for a 2022 limited edition pen. He says his creations are meant "to last for generations."

Daniel Sangjib Min/TIMES-DISPATCH



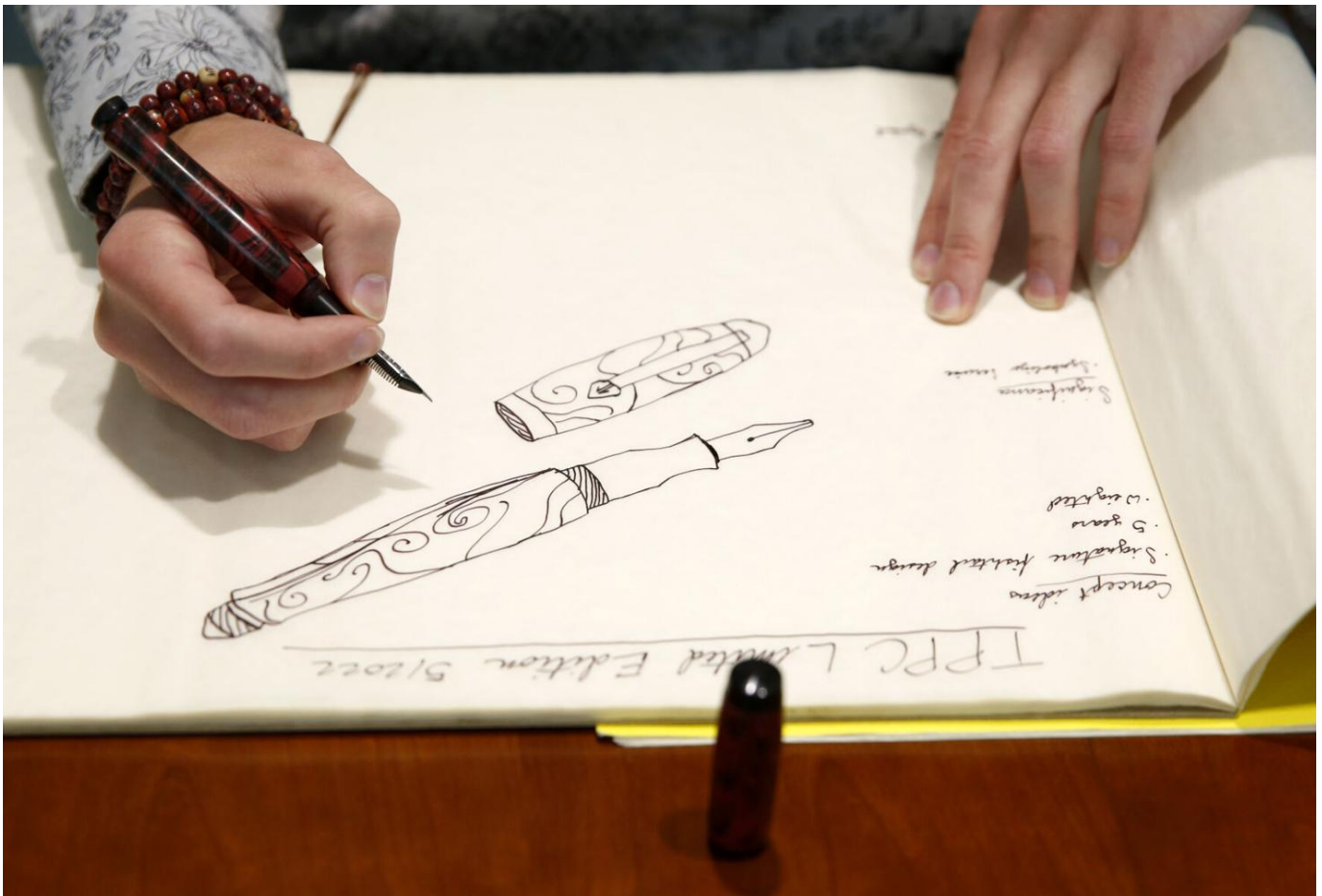
Turning Point Pen Co. creates custom-designed pens. Each handcrafted writing piece can be made up of more than a dozen pieces.

photos by Daniel Sangjib Min/TIMES-DISPATCH



A custom designed pen of Turning Point Pen Co., is shown.

Daniel Sangjib Min/TIMES-DISPATCH



Michael Kahwajy-Hyland, owner of Turning Point Pen Co., works on his design for 2022 limited edition, at Atlee Library, Va., on Wednesday, May 18, 2022.

Daniel Sangjib Min/TIMES-DISPATCH

