ROCKPORT — When he turned 62, Peter Korn told the board at the Center for Furniture Craftsmanship that he was retiring — when he turned 70.

Good to his word, Korn will step away from directing the woodworking school that he founded 28 years ago when he celebrates his 70th birthday on Dec. 16. “I had it planned out because my goal from the beginning was to create a sustainable institution that didn’t need me. That was in 1983, the first year of the school. And I knew this was the last and perhaps most difficult step in terms of institutional development, when the founding director steps away,” he said.

He entertains no second thoughts.

“I will say, the closer it gets, the more enticing it looks. I have spent considerably more time in my own workshop the past two years than I had been able to previously,” he said. “This is no longer a 60-hour-a-week job. I’m not saying it’s a 40-hour-a-week job, but it is no longer a 60-hour-a-week job.”

Evidence of his productivity can be seen in the exhibition in the center’s Messler Gallery, “Straight from the Heart,” a farewell exhibition that Korn curated as an homage to mentors and peers. He included a few of his own pieces, among them a pair of woven-fabric, beech and walnut chairs that he considers works in progress, reflecting his return to the studio and his first love of making fine, functional furniture. But the exhibition is mostly about his friends and fellow woodworkers. Specifically, it is a tribute to four mentors who led him into furniture-making and guided him: Tage Frid, James Krenov, Art Carpenter and Alan Peters, as well as contemporaries whose work he admires and whom he considers friends. Korn began working with his mentors in the 1980s, when he was starting out. The dozen peers whose work he selected for the show have taught at the center over the years, and they come from across the country and the globe: Brian Boggs (Asheville, North Carolina), Garrett Hack (Thetford Center, Vermont), David Haig (New Zealand), Thomas Hucker (Jersey City, New Jersey), Beth Ireland (St. Petersburg, Florida).

By BOB KEYES

Staff Writer

Peter Korn’s Dictionary Stand, made with walnut in 2005.

Peter Korn with one of his creations, a Continuous-arm Chair made of ash and leather. In the foreground is David Haig’s Monogram Rocking Chair, made of walnut.

NEXT HE’LL CRAFT A NEW FUTURE

Peter Korn is retiring from the Center for Furniture Craftsmanship, the woodworking school he founded in 1993. A farewell exhibition includes some of his own work as well as that of mentors and peers.

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KORN

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Peter Korn, executive director of the Center for Furniture Craftsmanship in Rockport, is retiring at the end of the year. The center is an influential woodworking school that teaches various levels of wood craftsmanship and design. Korn founded the center in 1993 and moved it to its current home in 1996.

Work in Progress, V3, 2021, by Peter Korn, made with European Beech, walnut, and Danish oil.

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