

Custom Signature Shape (directions for other custom shapes at end of tutorial)

Please refer to my "Custom Shape Basics" tutorial before attempting this one.

1. Create a new document by going to FILE > NEW. It doesn't really matter what size you create. It should be RGB, though. The other settings don't matter either since this will ultimately be a "vector shape".
2. Select the Type Tool. Choose a font. Because this will end up as a vector shape, you don't need to worry about the font size because you'll be able to make it as large or small as you want without any loss of quality. Make it large enough for you to see, though. It also doesn't matter what color you choose (except white, of course) because you will be able to change it to any color once you use the shape.

Start your signature off with a copyright symbol. The procedure is different for Windows and Mac.

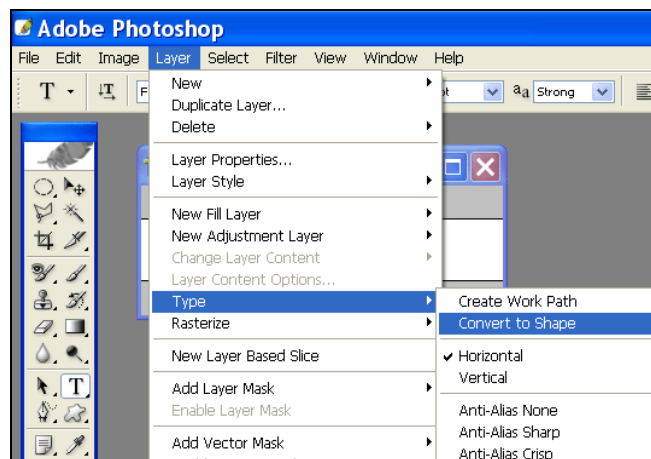
Windows - Hold the ALT key. Press 0169 on the numeric keypad. Let go of ALT and the symbol appears.

Mac - Hold the OPTION key. Press G. Let go of the OPTION key and the symbol appears.

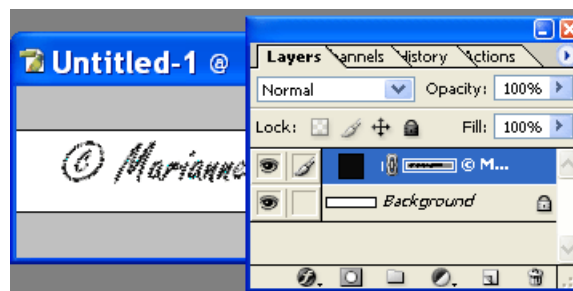
NOTE: Not all fonts will create a copyright symbol so you might have to choose a different one just for the copyright symbol. Once you have it, change your font if needed and type your signature.



3. Go to the Top Menu and select **Layer>Type>Convert to Shape**.



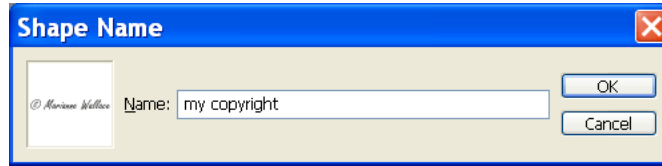
4. Look at your Layers Palette and note that you have a new Layer. Note, also, that the type in your document is selected (outlined).



"Advanced Users Only" Tip: At this point you can modify your signature shape. Click on the "Direct Selection tool". This will activate the path and you can now use the "Path Selection Tool" to edit it. This is an opportunity to make your text or any shape available, completely unique. This is very advanced and can get you into trouble if you're not familiar with the pen tools so **be careful!**

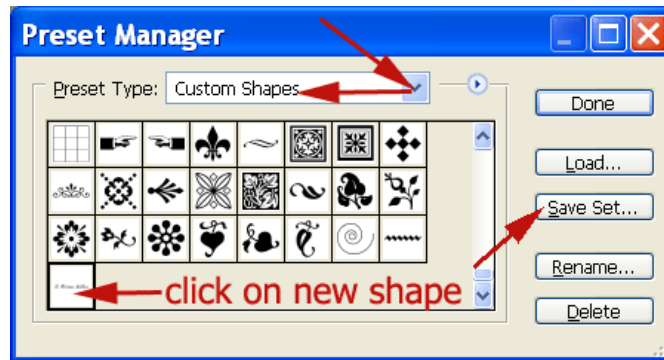
© Marianne

5. Now Go to the Edit menu and choose Define Custom Shape. When the box comes up, type a name for your custom signature shape. Click OK.

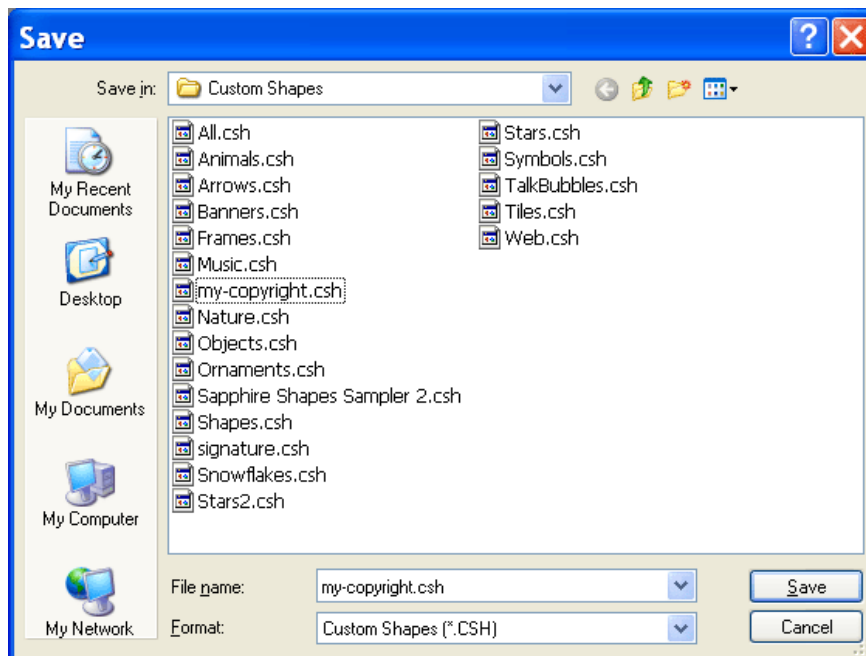


6. Check your "custom" shapes palette and note that your signature shape has been added to the very end of the list. Although it is now ready to use, it has not been permanently saved so you now need to save it to your "Presets" folder. Don't forget to follow through with the step that follows!

Go to the Top menu bar and click on Edit > Preset Manager. The following dialog box comes up. You will first need to click by "preset type" and choose "custom shapes" from the menu. Then scroll down to the bottom of the shapes and click on your new shape. Click "Save Set".



The following box comes up (might be slightly different on Mac). Name your shape and then click "Save". Click "Done" when the above box appears again.



7. Your Signature Shape is now ready to use! Open any image. Select your new Custom Signature Shape. On the top tool bar, set the first Option to “**shape layers**”. Now “click/hold and drag” out your new shape. (fig1)

8. Use the move tool to reposition if necessary or add whatever color or styles you desire. To change the color, just click on the color swatch which brings up the color picker. To add a style, click on the little “F” at the bottom of the layers palette. This will bring up the Layer Styles box when you can add special effects like a bevel. (fig2)



fig 1



fig 2

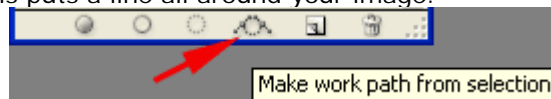
That’s all there is to it!

HAVE SOME FUN: Create a **custom shape** from anything!!! Choose one of the many fun “dingbats” or “icons” available in Text Fonts, make your own drawing or just make a selection of an interesting shape. Keep in mind, though, that your ultimate shape will ONLY be a SILHOUETTE so make sure it’s interesting enough to make sense.

NOTE: If you want to use dingbats or icons from text, then just follow above tutorial directions. **If you use a hand drawing** or a selection of an object, you will need to create a **PATH** before you can convert it to a shape.

Here’s how

1. Make a selection of an object or drawing...I selected a cat. (Don’t forget that you’ll only get a silhouette!)
2. Open the “**Paths**” palette (not in Elements, sorry) and click on the “make work path from selection” icon at the bottom of the palette. This puts a line all around your image.



3. Now just go to “Edit” and choose “define custom shape”. Then follow the tutorial above starting at #6.

Here is my cat custom shape:



One use for your new shapes on your own greeting cards such as below. To create my card, I created a new document and then clicked on “View>show> grid”. I then created a new blank layer, made a selection on the Grid and filled it with a color. I repeated this step 9 times so that I had a layer for each colored square. I used the Transform Tool to distort the colored squares making them more interesting. I then put in the text and applied a gradient overlay to each text layer. I then found holiday “dingbats”, made them into shapes. I added a metallic “style” and positioned them. Because everything is on a separate layer, you can move things around as desired.

