



Watercolor U.S.A. Honor Society

Shown: Sun Setting Behind Trees (detail), by Donald Lake

WHS President's Letter *by WHS President, Laurin McCracken*

We are all looking forward to seeing this year's Watercolor USA. In looking over the list of the artists that have been accepted into this year's exhibition, I believe that we can safely predict that we will see some fine examples of what watercolor can do as well as some wonderfully experimental art.

This newsletter includes announcements about how to enter "Watercolor NOW! 2018". This is the Watercolor USA Honor Society's biannual member exhibition. We want to see your work included in this exhibit.

The Board of WHS has been working hard on your behalf. A major update to the society's By-laws has been headed by Sandra Schaeffer, Sandra serves on your board as Historian and has proved to be invaluable resource to me.

The WHS Board – I am pleased to report that all of the serving board members have agreed to stay on for another 2-year term, including myself. I believe that we all feel that while we are accomplishing a great deal to move the society forward and to raising the awareness of WHS in the nation, there is much that still needs to be done.

The number of artists painting in watercolor continues to grow in the US and around the world. One of the best examples of this growth is the FabrianoInAquarello event held recently in Fabriano, Italy. The largest watercolor exhibition in the world was held in Fabriano in May. There were more than 70 countries represented and more than 1,400 pieces of art were on display. Over 2,000 artists were in attendance during the three days of the opening of the show. Those days included demonstrations by watercolorists from around the world.

The following piece was recently included in the American Watercolor Weekly On-line Watercolor Newsletter under the title "Change Starts with Us." I hope that you will join this conversation about the importance of watercolor in the greater world of art.



Laurin McCracken,
WHS President

The Value of Watercolor

The question comes to me in many forms. How do we advance the reputation of watercolor? How do we get over the age-old prejudices against our medium? How do we reposition the value of watercolor in the minds of collectors and gallery owners and print journalists and museum directors? How do we combat the idea that watercolor is a fugitive medium? (continued...)

INSIDE:

President's Message - 1

Message from the

Newsletter Editor - 3

Dean Mitchell

Award - 4

Watercolor USA - 6

Memorials - 7

Donald Lake

Award - 8

Member News - 11

Watercolor Now! - 12

How do we address the price differential between watercolor paintings and those painted in oil or acrylic?

I believe the answer lies with watercolorists. We need to believe in our medium. We need to be more publicly supportive of our medium.

**We have to be
the champions
of our medium.**

I was recently in a discussion with several watercolorists about this issue. One said that he did not call himself a watercolorist, but was just an artist to avoid the stigma associated with watercolor. Another asked why would he want to be identified with a lesser art form and therefore he called himself a painter. I think that this approach is wrong, wrong, wrong and seriously detrimental to our goal of advancing the recognition of watercolor as a superior art medium.

I think each one of us who prides themselves on the creation of quality art through the medium of watercolor should stand up and shout, "I am a watercolorist, I am proud to be a watercolorist, and I am proud of my medium, watercolor."

How can we get anyone to believe that watercolor is an equal to or better art form if we hide our pride under a basket and duck our heads rather than admit that our chosen medium is flipping fantastic?

Many times, we are our own worst enemy. I recently saw the price listing of paintings by 30 top watercolorists from all over the country. All of the paintings were of the same size and offered for sale unframed, in my mind a real "apples-to-apples" comparison. The prices ranged from a few hundred dollars to a few thousand. If we are so uncertain about the value of our art, how can the public be wiser?

We are beginning to see a number of examples of artists who have moved the price point (Yes, let's face reality and talk about sales in the language of the marketplace, such as price-point and all that terminology) of their paintings up in the galleries in which their work is shown.

Over the past 5 years, I have been able to move the price of my full sheet paintings from \$2,800 to over \$5,000. A number of my watercolor friends have greatly exceeded those price points. Agreed, you have to be in the right gallery in the right geographic area of the country.

There are also many stories of watercolorists selling their paintings on-line for prices in the thousands. But, if you price your paintings in the hundreds, that is what you will get for them and you will be supporting the public's lower opinion about the value of watercolors.

You have to get away from your painting board and understand the dynamics of the retail art market. If you just sit back and complain that no one is paying enough money for your paintings, then you are doomed to selling your paintings at under their value.

If you are sitting there waiting for a top gallery to find you and sell your work at top dollar, you are in for a shock. It isn't going to happen. If you want success in the market you have to work to make that success happen.

If you only want to sell your paintings in Memphis, TN, then you have to be aware that Memphis is a \$350 watercolor market. If you are not willing to go where you can get a better price, then you have no reason to complain. If you want to sell your paintings for thousands of dollars, you have to find galleries that will and can sell your paintings at those prices. They exist, but probably not just down your street and around the corner.

Fort Worth is not a city that values watercolors. The top prices in local galleries rarely exceed

\$1,000. And it usually has to be a painting of Bluebonnets. There are a lot of very wealthy people in Fort Worth; but they don't, as a rule, buy their paintings locally. They go to New York, London or Paris. This is just a fact of life. You can't sit on the corner of Main Street and 7th and cry about the fact that you can't get the value you want for your watercolors in Fort Worth.

On the other hand, Fort Worth's annual Main Street art show attracts fine painters, sculptors, print makers. etc. from all over the country. I have talked with watercolorists who are selling \$50,000 to \$150,000 and more worth of paintings during the four days of the fair. Most told me that they do three to six fairs a year. Those artists know their market, work hard to create a volume of work, and are willing to work the fair circuit to enjoy a very high standard of living.

If we continue to look for and support those establishments that do treat us and our work with respect, we will raise the value of watercolor across the marketplace, across the country, and around the world.

If I could, I would wear an insignia on my collar that proclaims I am a watercolorist, just the way I wore my captain's bars when I was in the Corps of Engineers of the US Army. I was proud of being an officer serving my country, and I am equally proud to be a watercolorist.

We all need to become advocates and educators in this cause. We need to submit our best work to competitions. We need to attend those exhibitions. We need to support galleries and exhibition spaces that show watercolor. We need to go to opening nights for shows for other watercolor artists. Each of us plays a part in making watercolor a more important and desired medium. Get out there and spread the message. Watercolor is great!

- **Laurin McCracken AWS NWS WHS**
President, Watercolor USA Honor Society

“Au Revoir” from the Editor *Chris Buth-Furness, Newsletter Editor*

Painters of Watercolor USA Honor Society you are the most hard working, talented and inspiring group of artists I have had the pleasure to get to know. I've enjoyed seeing your work, interviewing you for the newsletter, sharing your member news and honoring your colleagues in featured memorials. This is my last issue as newsletter editor, but I will at times continue to



provide content when able and when asked. If you have information to share for future newsletters or wish to be interviewed, please feel free to contact me at chrisbuthfurn@gmail.com or the WHS President Laurin McCracken at laurinmc@aol.com

The visual enrichments to our newsletter have been made possible with the help of our newsletter's graphic designer, Aaron Wilbers (Crow's Mouth Design). He will continue to work with the new WHS news editor. More of his work can be viewed online at www.crowsmouth.com.

Thank you all so much for your time and talent. It's a good painting day today.

Christine Buth-Furness

WHS Newsletter Editor

#chrisbuthfurness on Instagram

Dean Mitchell: 2018 Recipient of WHS Lifetime Achievement Award

by Christine Buth-Furness, Newsletter Editor

Congratulations to Dean Mitchell, recipient of the 2018 WHS Lifetime Achievement Award! Dean is honored to be the recipient of this award, and I spent a fun and insightful hour on the phone with him and I asked him to share his thoughts on the art of painting in watercolor. The following is gleaned from our conversation and I have paraphrased his insightful responses for you. For more information about Dean and his work please visit his website: www.deanmitchellstudio.com

Q) I asked what most influenced him early in life to become an artist?

A) He credits his grandmother with nurturing him to become an artist. He recalls that she gave him a paint by number set to get him started. The experience was ok but the 2nd time he painted, he explained, he “did it freehand.” He always enjoyed drawing cartoons on Saturday mornings, and they left an impression on him, but he recalls that his mother was not supportive and did not want him to become an artist.

Q) He chooses to paint the solitary figure often alone and in contemplation. I asked him, “How do you choose your subjects? You paint the figure sitting or standing in a specific environment or you zoom in and focus more upon the details of the face. What leads you to this decision? Talk about interpreting the individual through painting.”

A) He wants to dignify people, provide a reflection on how things do not last, wear out, how life takes a grip and leaves a person vulnerable. In the portraits he zooms in on the face as the subject and what goes on in the space around the face and figure. He looks at the individual and takes the figure out of the social environment.

He reiterates that it always has been an intuitive process and is drawn to the solitary because his mother fled a small town as a result of an affair with his father. His grandmother and grandfather raised him from 11 months old. He’s in a constant search for intimacy and is not drawn to things that are very pretty in nature. He’s drawn to things that are worn and have a “discardness” to them.

He watched his grandmother work hard for low wages. In his childhood he observed the civil rights movement, and its influences led him to dignify people in his paintings. His great grandmother died when he was 7 or 8 and saw that things did not live forever. Life take its grip on people, and he likes that vulnerability and is drawn closer too it. He emphasized that no one is superior to anyone. He doesn’t see things on a permanent level and conveys that we are all the same and want the same things.



Mr. Ragland at the Easel, 20"x15", Watercolor, Dean Mitchell



Carrie-Mae, 20"x15", Watercolor, Dean Mitchell

He said, “We all sit in solitary and reflect on our lives at some point.”

Q) I noted he has a specific palette. I asked him to talk about the presence of color as a tool to build form or the absence of color, and why he makes those choices.

A) He explained that he grew up not having art and received approval for making something look like something. The teacher told him he had an intuitive eye for composition, but when he responded that he wanted to make something look like something, the teacher said that his intuitive approach was abstraction.

He’s drawn to black and white design in abstraction — Franz Klein and Robert Motherwell for example. Always looking at color, color which pulls audience into space, floats into space. He states that he was “thrust” into the West and found an audience there. When teaching workshops he stated that he couldn’t talk while painting because the students wanted him to provide them with “the answers.” and they didn’t want to go through their own process of discovery.



Bob Ragland, 12.5"x13.5", Watercolor, Dean Mitchell

Q) I asked him to talk about the construction of his paintings and I asked, “How would you best describe your technique and process in creating a painting? I see that you build value and create a presence with light and shadow. This is evident in both your figurative work as well as in the landscape and architectural imagery.”

A) He explained that he works with the deepest color first or light to dark. It all depends on how he’s feeling. He does a soft wash up, creates a mood. Spends time looking at the person he’s painting. He uses friends and family often as his subjects. He says there’s no layout to the paintings. He does, however draw a lot from the figure as “drawing is key.” He took nude figure drawing at the Kansas City Art Institute and prefers the 2 to 3 minute mixture drawings. Spontaneity is important in his work.

Q) I asked if he painted in series and what challenge this presents?

A) Portraits are sometimes done in a series. He painted a group inspired by the Pima-Maricopa Indian Community in Scottsdale, Arizona and found it to be a challenging series and a commentary. He was interested in the static vs. chaotic and the interesting disconnect with people, the emotion evident, the reaction to human behavior, how they occupy space and the psychological reaction to space. “How do you feel?”

He did a portrait series of a 90 year old woman whom he painted for 8 years. He was fascinated with that stage of her life and in his paintings wanted to show people the nuances of life.

Q) I asked the following: “As you work in more than one medium, what specifically do you like about watercolor? People often say that watercolor is ‘so hard.’ Do you feel this is true and that there is more technical skill required to paint with watercolor? Talk about that move from transparency in your watercolors and opacity in your oils.”

A) He experiments in his work. He paints oils like watercolors. Experiments with things such as sand. Currently has 30 paintings going on in studio and will put a watercolor away and turn to oil painting and then two days later return to watercolor. He simultaneously works in both. To him painting is about problem solving. He lets the canvas come through and in his watercolors 99% of the time the white is the white of the paper. If white paint is added it’s done on purpose.

Q) I asked him to name one, two or more artists whom he has learned from and who have inspired him?

A) On his list are Edward Hopper, Andrew Wyeth, Pablo Picasso, Richard Diebenkorn, Henri Matisse and Alberto Giacometti. He looks at Franz Kline because of the calligraphic nature of his work.

He sees art as knowledge. An idealist makes the world better and when showing its frailness, the work reacts to us too. Whatever we do to it, we are creating that affect. Art is fascinating and change promotes ideas.

Q) I wanted to know if in his career he entered juried competitions and if so, I wanted him to talk about his experience with this and describe the benefits if he’s found some.

A) Dean thinks that juried competition is of benefit to an artist's career. He said that Hallmark hired him, and his goal was to be a fine artist in museums. He was accepted into AWS on his first try. In a featured article Steve Doherty wrote for American Artists Magazine Mitchell hid the fact that he was black.

I quote Dean here — “Some black curators and art historians felt I was doing black images that were comfortable in nature to white people. It reminded them of the old south and this was why they liked them. I was deeply offended. I'm not sure how to get that point across. I didn't want my race known because I was told over and over how racist the art world was. That's why a lot of friends told me not to let America Artist run a photo along side my article back in 1987.”

The result of the American Artist article was Dean's first museum show, and he didn't understand the controversy that he was creating. He noted that Blacks hated him for this, and at a Texas A & M lecture it was noted that a black artist was unique.

Q) If you were asked to mentor an emerging artist working in watercolor, what advice would you give him/her.

Dean admitted that for some reason people are afraid of painting with watercolor. He says don't be afraid to make a mistake. It's paint and paper. Experiment and learn from the process of doing. Repetition over and over. Learn by not being afraid. Fearlessly paint and if it doesn't work start over. Don't care if you mess up. Be spontaneous. It's like a dance.

Thank you Dean for taking the time to speak to us.



Tampa Bay Corner, 20"x30", Acrylic, Dean Mitchell



Growing Wild, 20"x30", Watercolor, Dean Mitchell

WATERCOLOR USA 2018

June 2 - Aug. 26, 2018 • Opening Reception: June 1, 5:30-7:00pm

Weisel and Kelly Galleries, at Springfield Art Museum

1111 E. Brookside Dr., Springfield, MO 65807

This is the **57th exhibition** of Watercolor USA, a national, annual juried exhibition recognizing aqueous media painting. The event is open to artists from all 50 states and US territories and judged for a variety of prizes and possible purchase by the Museum. This year's exhibition is judged by **Kelly Kane**, a leader in art publishing for more than 20 years, the last 13 as *Editor-in-Chief of Watercolor Artist magazine*. She also served formerly as Content Director for *The Artist's Magazine*, *Drawing*, *Acrylic Artist* and *Pastel Journal*.

Approximately **\$20,000 in cash awards** are available; top awards are \$3,000, \$2,000, and \$1,500 cash. Additional cash awards are generously provided by the WHS-USA.

Related programs include: *Chamber Music Concert*, Sunday, June 3, 3:00pm, in the Courtyard Gallery. Free and open to the public. Seating is limited.

Fantastic Friday (w/ Springfield-Greene County Library District), Friday, June 29, 10:00am - 12:00pm, Lobby, Community Room, Classrooms, and Galleries

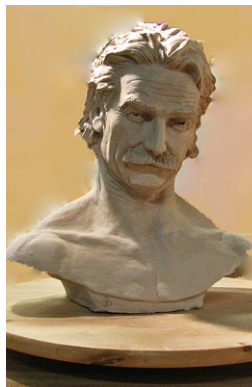


Memorials



Richard Philip Clubb ~ 1952 - 2018

Born in Des Moines and raised in Peoria, IL, Rick served domestically in the Coast Guard Reserves during the Vietnam War. He earned a BA in Art from Western Illinois University, and was a successful commercial artist, working in the Chicago area. Later, from his studio in the Wheaton area he worked on fine art in portraiture, cityscape watercolors, work horse farming depictions, and various forms of sculpture. He was a charter member of the WHS, and was at the first meeting and symposium of the WHS in Spring Green, WI. WHS will have a Memorial award in his honor for the 2018 Watercolor USA exhibit along with the memorial awards for Ann Pierce. **To read more on Rick's involvement in WHS and in it's creation, you may view this document:** ([click here](http://www.watercolorusahonorsociety.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/A-Brief-History-Of-Watercolor-USA-Honor-Society.pdf)) <http://www.watercolorusahonorsociety.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/A-Brief-History-Of-Watercolor-USA-Honor-Society.pdf>



The Clubb family requests any donations be made to WHS in Richard's memory. To do so, send donations to The Watercolor USA Honor Society at P.O. Box 645, Big Horn, WY 82833.

A more thorough obituary may be viewed online at:

([click here](http://www.hultgrenfh.com/obituary/richard-clubb)) <http://www.hultgrenfh.com/obituary/richard-clubb>

You can view many of Rick's works on his website: www.rickclubb.com ([click here](#))

Ann Trucksess Pierce ~ 1931-2017

Anne developed the watercolor painting program for Chico State College. During her 31-year tenure at Chico State the watermedia program flourished. Ann was recognized as a Master Teacher, and she served as chair of the Art Department between 1980 and 1983. Throughout her distinguished career, Ann found great joy in teaching students. Thanks to her impressive mastery of materials and techniques and her enthusiasm for painting and rigorous learning, she influenced hundreds of art students and community members to pursue their creative passions. Professor Pierce's professional career marked her as a national leader in academic watermedia.



Her paintings were included in over 35 major art exhibitions, including those of the National Watercolor Society, Rocky Mountain National Watermedia, and the Chancellor's Distinguished Artists' Forum Exhibition, CSULA. Ann won numerous awards for her work, such as the Award of Excellence, Newbold Purchase Award, Lodi, the Arjomari Paper Award by the Kentucky Watercolor Society, and the prestigious International Exhibition Silver Recognition by the San Diego Watercolor Society. She had dozens of one-person shows. She was featured in Who's Who In American Art, American Artist, Watercolor Magazine, Portrait Inspirations, and many others. Ann's approach to painting was intuitive, evolving on both a conscious and subconscious level. She had the unique ability to pull abstract form from complex visual stimuli.

Donald Lake: 2018 Recipient of WHS Lifetime Achievement Award

by Christine Buth-Furness, Newsletter Editor

Congratulations to Donald Lake, recipient of the 2018 WHS Lifetime Achievement Award! Donald is honored to be the recipient of this award and although I didn't get to interview him in person, I asked him to share his thoughts on the art of painting in watercolor. For more information about his work please visit his website at <https://www.donlakeart.com>. Please enjoy reading his insightful and inspiring responses and perusing his beautiful imagery. - *Christine Buth-Furness*

Early influence...

I was always interested in drawing as a kid, but only in an ordinary way, one of many hobbies and interests I had. My parents always made sure I had art supplies. But a major influence came when I visited the art museum and saw a show of very large abstract expressionist paintings. I was very excited by those paintings and thought then that if this is what an artist does, I want to be an artist. It was a powerful thing for a kid and that remained my goal and my image of what I wanted to do for many years.

Realist industrial vs. landscape images studio vs. plein aire...

Much of the work I have done is studio work. I have always understood "major work" as being a large undertaking that requires time, effort and expertise to execute. I spent thirty-eight years as a professor of art and that job, done properly, is truly a full time job. Given my family and all that means, I had very limited time late at night to paint. That's one factor that led to my slow deliberate process and one I could stop and start, and work on in bits over several weeks. Also, at the time I began to make the shift from big and more raw abstract oil paintings, I was spending much of my day teaching students how to draw realistically and with high technique. That focus came into my own work as I had returned to drawing, looking to make a new start. I was using whatever materials I had, and some old tubes of watercolor became ingredients in my drawings. That is how I got started, slowly, using watercolor as a material. Before too long I was finding ways to use it with some control, to fit into the realist drawings I was making. That interest grew and before long I attempted my first "real art" with watercolor alone.

So, my initial involvement with watercolor was in putting it to a very controlled realist purpose and that way of thinking continues more or less to this day. Working in that manner also fit into the work time I had, perhaps three hours per night, slowly building a finished painting. And keep in mind that was in the early seventies when Photo Realist work was dominant in the art world, so tight realism seemed a worthy direction to be taking. I had real uneasiness about using my photographs as source material, given my education and purpose as an abstract expressionist. But I found ways to use the photos in chunks and in combinations that seemed useful and also avoided the dreaded idea of painting from photos. I used masks to keep the rest of my paper clean and hidden as I painted in the exposed area and thereby kept that small bit rather detached from the forms around it. Each piece was about a day's work and would be made up of whatever elements fit inside the mask. Eventually I became practical about the use of photos as I realized their usefulness and that paintings follow their own impulses. (More about that later.)

However, that way of working with watercolor rules out some of the most dynamic and exciting aspects of the medium, not to mention its history as a portable medium suited to on location painting. I found the balance to slow methodical studio methods in going outside to paint in a loose way. I generally only use a large round brush, nothing smaller than a 12 round so that I avoid the small detailed work I would normally do in the studio. On location work is done in three hours or less, to accommodate the change of light and make a broad statement about what is there in front of me. It is a high-risk, high-reward way of working and one that I find a very enjoyable counterbalance to my more slow and sustained studio methods. And besides, that immediacy is like drawing--direct, gestural. Drawing is so integral to whatever I'm doing and on location painting



*Blast Furnace, 37" x 25",
Watercolor, Donald Lake*

is for me a loose drawing. When on camping trips I have worked in sketchbooks shifting back and forth from drawing to watercolor without giving much thought to why. They are largely one in the same way of directly working from what's in front of me.

(More about realist painting....)

As a painter who works in realism, there is often a sort of misguided criticism based on verisimilitude. It is as if the purpose of painting is to see if you can make it "as real as a photograph." Often people don't know that to make something "real" is an effort in editing, what you leave out, what you invent in, how you move pieces around and how you treat it. I would say that I COULD make it look like a photograph but the viewer would be disappointed if I did. My work is a painting with all that implies. Photographs as a resource ARE part of my studio working process, but they are



'57 Airstream Caravaner, 20.5" x 28", Watercolor, Donald Lake

not what I'm about. I have all the other concerns about drawing and color and emphasis and light and surface that a painter in other idioms has. It shortchanges my effort to imagine that I am only reproducing a photograph.

That I work in watercolor also adds some "expectations." Many people made a watercolor painting in the sixth grade and expect watercolors to be loose, runny, pale wet-into-wet things. And they may expect a certain kind of subject or form. My work doesn't generally fit into that frame. So I think many people look at my paintings and are very aware that it is outside their expectations, hopefully in a good way. Actually, many painters can do what I can do, but you almost have to be looking at a lot of art to know that. For me, after forty-some years of doing this it doesn't seem remarkable, but I know that my experience in this work is not at all what the viewer brings to the paintings.

To make a realist watercolor requires that you know when and how to handle watercolor in its many techniques. I spend about as much time working large wet washes over each other as I do in rendering small details. I spend a lot of time moving the paint around which is already dry on the sheet, taking some off, putting some on. I may paint a three inch square in a long day's work, or I may paint a three by four foot area with a three inch brush in ten or so layers during an afternoon's work. I know more about specific types of watercolor paper than I can put into words. I have different ways of using my eyes to see something besides the things there in front of me. I see little difference in painting the landscape from a fishing boat and painting from photographs and memories, except for the speed and bold directness required when painting on location. In any case, when you paint in a realist mode, drawing is what you're doing, sometimes with a pencil and sometimes with a brush, always seeing the subject as a collection of contrasts and sizes and alignments of shapes. It comes to you as a pattern

that grows, changes, reveals things. I have often said—and it is a truth most artists know—that drawing as a way of learning about something, is the equal of reading and writing. People who learn to draw have learned a wonderful foreign language that reveals things words cannot.



Winter Sticks, 28" x 40.5", Watercolor, Donald Lake

Since I am interested in the way things look, there is a realist bias in what I paint. I have at periods in my studio life painted the same subject areas for years at a time. Most notably I painted images of American industry for about fifteen years and it is the work for which I am best known, or most identified since I sort of "owned" that imagery for a long time. Few others found in that sort of imagery the intensity of interest that I did. To walk into a factory or industrial plant excited all my senses and those places reminded me of my own experience working in a factory during my college years.



Sun Setting Behind Trees, 16.5" x 32", Watercolor, Donald Lake

Lately though, most of my work has to do with the landscape—places I've loved for a long time, and new places that have stuck in my mind so much that I have tried to paint them. We travel a lot in a camping trailer and have visited a lot of places. Sometimes I recognize "something" that seems special, remarkable, talks

to me in some vague hard-to-know way except to know this is a special place, or a special light, ...something. I shoot pictures at those times, and sometimes I am somewhere I can draw or paint right there. If not, I take home those photos and those memories and sometimes some notes and over time, most of those things don't turn into anything. But sometimes there is a lasting nag that demands some attention and those usually turn into a painting, or five paintings, or something. I spent over ten years trying to paint the essence of my experiences in the Flint Hills of Kansas around property we bought and love. Other times I've painted the drama I felt at certain seashores, or at a southwestern canyon location, or up in the wilderness of the Boundary Waters. My early work was focused on shiny objects—fire trucks, world war II vintage aircraft, and other bodies of work were prompted by my backyard swimming pool and the figures in it. I'm painting shiny manmade objects again lately with my recent infatuation with Airstream trailers.

I've painted the figure but I don't think of myself as a figure painter. I sometimes think that putting a figure into the sort of paintings I make can render them more an illustration—the story of THAT figure in that space rather than the viewer being required to put HIMSELF as the participant in the pictorial space. To derive anything from a painting requires that you bring your own life experience and memories to the reading of a painting. It "makes you think about" something similar you may have done or seen and allows you to find the personal meaning in the picture. I tend to think that is more likely for the viewer if I don't put realistic figures in my paintings.

An artist is recording his life in some form, responding with his medium to the things that are important to him. For me, it is trying to be aware, notice the things around me that seem important at the moment, think about what I'm seeing and about why that place or that moment seems remarkable to me. In that sense, the whole body of my work is a record of my life, kind of organized by the decade, more or less. As in many aspects of life, that is easier to see in retrospect, now in the long view.

Each painting changes me in some way, and I hope to realize something new as I work. I gradually discard old things that once seemed so important, and I add a new color or tool or technique. And because I work with representational imagery, I am informed about some place or thing or about form in general. So growth is a slow process of small changes, not a startling revelation. When I am struck by a new awareness or recognize a new idea as I paint, I find that very satisfying. Between those times, I always like to draw, feel the touch of the paper, and watch the illusion build on the page. That may be the most dependable reward.

"Each painting changes me in some way, and I hope to realize something new as I work".

About some influences...

I have come to appreciate the masters of the medium far more now than I did as a young person. I know what I'm seeing now, after a lifetime of working in watercolor and their lessons are far more clear, accessible. But other artists have been influential as well, the famous and not famous ones that have befriended me, or supported me as time went along. I had some

encouraging teachers and later, fellow artists who have kept me on track, offered timely advice or sage comments. Two painters in particular -- **Glenn Bradshaw**, and especially **Harold Gregor** who by their example demonstrate what it means to be an artist, have been friends and mentors and have had much to do with the choices I've made and the successes I've had.

About juried shows and such....

There are a lot of ways to be an artist. One can work their way up the ladder of juried competitions. Or you can pursue the realm of academe. Or you can enter the world of galleries and representation. Or you may find a path in workshop teaching. It may give a kind of validation to achieve success in one of these arenas. Regardless of the process, it is the work that ultimately is the reward. For myself, I found all the time spent entering and packing and the shipping expenses to be kind of spinning my wheels with my limited studio time, so I didn't pursue all those credentials of being in all the big shows. Perhaps because of my generation, I thought some success in the galleries was the goal and I sought that. I did always think Watercolor USA was the premier show for watercolor and I often submitted work there if not lots of other shows. My life was dedicated more to teaching than to studio work, so I consider my work there to be my most important contribution as an artist. I am proud to be an artist and I look back upon a lifetime of work mostly in watercolor satisfied that I've done the best work I can in a professional way.

About "watercolor is so hard"...

I have taught watercolor and water media painting for over forty years in all kinds of settings. Like other things, watercolor requires you learn the physical skills of doing it. It may be more unforgiving than some other painting media, yes, but it is regarded as "difficult" only by those who haven't taken the time to learn how to manage it. It is not hard to undo a lot of problems or invent your way past them once you learn how. If people fail it is usually because they didn't go far enough, not that they went too far. Learn about papers, learn the areas of dry layering, wet into wet dynamics, brushwork and texture, and learn about your pigments and the critical nature of value. Try everything and never stop experimenting to learn more. It's not a recipe. I have never started a painting without that background feeling of "I wonder if I can do this" because painting in any medium is problem solving. If it isn't challenging anymore, you're not doing it right. We are not artisans, **we are artists**, creative professionals. Know the difference.

Member News

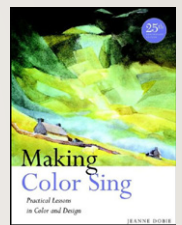
Daven Anderson's series of over 50 paintings: "THE RIVERS: A Celebration of Life and Work on America's Waterways" will open with a reception on May 3rd at the Evansville (IN) Museum of Art, Science & Technology. Now - July 15. This is the fourth museum exhibition of eight currently scheduled through 2021. A 134 page exhibition catalog supports the exhibition. Details online at: www.TheRiversExhibition.com

Jeanne Dobie's (AWS, NWS, TWSA-M, PWS, PWCS, FWS, WC USA HONOR SOC) well recognized book, *'Making Color Sing'*, is now published in Russian, and she will be the **Juror of their first landscape exhibition**. Dobie's book is available in French and Chinese also. Copies of the Russian book can be ordered online from www.ozon.ru, a site able to ship from Russia.

Katherine Chang Liu was one of the jurors for the **Wisconsin Visual Artists 2018 Wisconsin Biennial** at the Museum of Wisconsin Art, West Bend, WI. The work is on exhibit through April 8. She is also the sole juror for the 50th **2018 Watercolor West International Juried Exhibition** October 13 to December 16, 2018.

Robert Lee Mejer (MFA, WHS, ISEA/N.F., NWS, TWSA, MOWS, IWS, SDWS) exhibited *'Inscapes'*, a **50-year art retrospective**, spanning his work from 1968-2018, at the Quincy Art Center in Quincy, IL. He held a gallery talk at the same venue. Robert is a Professor of Art, the Gray Gallery Curator, and Art Program Coordinator at Quincy University.

John Salminen is the sole juror for the **2018 International Exhibition of The San Diego Watercolor Society**



Take PC #6 - Watercolor, 2017, Robert Lee Mejer

WHS artists,

I encourage you to submit a painting for our non-juried membership show “Watercolor Now! 2018” at the Harwell in Poplar Bluff, MO. Please see prospectus for details.

“We at the Margaret Harwell Art museum are thrilled and honored to have the opportunity to host the Watercolor USA Honor Society’s Watercolor Now 2018 exhibition. This is a rare opportunity for the citizens of Southeast Missouri and Northeast Arkansas to see such a rich variety of quality, imaginative, diverse works of art. It is one thing to see art in a book or magazine or computer screen and quite another to see it up close, as it was intended. To be able to see fine art produced by 200 of the finest water media artists in the country is an incredible thing to happen for the Poplar Bluff area. We are even collaborating with our public library to provide more space to exhibit these fine works. This is not just for our locals, this is a destination exhibit. This will make our museum a destination venue. Something for people to travel hundreds of miles to see as I know many of our residents have traveled the 180 miles to Springfield to see it there. We thank the committee for entrusting us with this honor and look forward to October.”

Steve Whitworth

Director: Margaret Harwell Art Museum

WATERCOLOR Now! 2018

An Exhibition of WHS Members Watercolors

Oct. 6 - Nov. 24, 2018

Margaret Harwell Art Museum

421 N. Main St., Poplar Bluff, MO 63901

Completed entries + digital image to be sent to Robert Lee Mejer: mejerbob@quincy.edu

For questions, please contact Bob Mejer via email or call 217-228-5371

Entry form and prospectus available on the WHS website:

(click here) <http://www.watercolorusahonorsociety.org/news/>

Important Dates:

| | |
|-----------------|---|
| April 30 | Prospectus e-mailed or mailed to WHS members |
| June 30 | Deadline for completed entry form & digital image |
| Sept. 26 | Paintings should arrive at Museum on or before this date |
| Oct. 6 | Opening reception, 6:00-8:00pm, Margaret Harwell Art Museum |
| Nov. 24 | Closing reception, 6:00-8:00pm, Margaret Harwell Art Museum |