THE ARTISTS ISSUE #1

It has been my great privilege to get to know the artists in this issue. I think you, like me, will be very proud that they are “sistahs” in Gulf Park College for Women. The artists shown here are first class and can stand up to artists anywhere. I wish that I could have published several paintings by each, but in most cases, these talented women have their own websites and Facebook pages where more of their work can be seen and purchased. We urge you to support them.

Though undoubtedly there are other GPC artists out there, these women came forward after a call for artists was published on the GPC Facebook page, and through word-of-mouth referrals. I wish all of them could be shown together in this issue, but the response was so successful that we’ll have to present the rest in our next issue. (If you know of other visual artists, please hook us up.)

The artists shown here are presented in alphabetical order.

An artists’ issue admittedly is a bit unusual for a newsletter. Whether you like it or you don’t please let me know at 54dobes489daze@gmail.com. Naturally, we hope you like it!

Sidney Oliver, Editor
Jackie Armstrong

I was at Gulf Park in 1967-68 as a freshman (junior) and then transferred to Auburn University. Loved Auburn but, in retrospect, wish I had stayed a GPC a second year. I have great memories of that time when we thought we were being tortured! Riding and swimming were my interests. Art came much later.

I started out with drawing then went to watercolor. My interest in oils began about 14 years ago. (IT IS NEVER TOO LATE!) People frequently say to me, “I can't draw a stick person,” having no clue that art is a product of the mind, not the hands. It is about learning to see, not wield a brush. To paraphrase one of my favorite art books, Art and Fear, being successful with art is 90% diligent work and 10% talent. I have no natural talent but I have painted miles of canvas," which most of us consider a prerequisite to decent results. Being stubborn and relentless helps!

With regard to my artist's statement, my attempts, and preoccupation with beauty is an antidote for my vocation. I have been a mental health therapist (still working part-time) for 48 years and creating peace and beauty is what I need. I am not drawn to disturbing subject matter and when I started painting my goal was to be able to produce a reasonably good rendition of whatever pleased me. As one can tell, I have no genre. I just paint whatever I want! (I give at the office!)
My story in art begins with the Saturday classes at Gulf Park. Finding a second year of them so thoroughly unappealing, I chose the least academic sounding one offered. That’s how I ended up taking the Art and Design classes with Tom Waters. The following summer, my family moved from Mobile to San Antonio, and I took along an unopened set of watercolors from the art classes. I didn’t know it at the time, but that box of paint was going to change the course of my life. Being in a new city with no friends, and nothing to do until classes started in the fall, I pulled out the paint and began to explore it. I spent the beginning of the summer with the watercolors, then bought some oil paints and started working with them. When school started (Trinity University), I enrolled for a round of general education courses – Biology, Economics, English, and Math. I found myself coming home to paint most days and soon realized I was finding it a lot more engaging than what I was learning at school.

I didn’t consider majoring in Art, and didn’t take any art classes for quite a few years, but just kept painting. Eventually, I decided I wanted to teach, so returned to school for a BFA and an MFA at Arizona State University. Afterwards, I taught in the Interdisciplinary Art program at Arizona University West for a few years, while also teaching at Phoenix College, which is where I still am.

My paintings are based on a combination of observation, imagination, and memory, and are largely an expression of my interest in the world around me. I approach the natural world with both chills and a continuous measure of excitement. I’ve had that response from the time I learned that we live on a rock in the Milky Way. My sense of the world as expansive, rich, surprising, and a little scary – is something I try to add to my paintings. My work is often playful, and at times, lightly satirical. I’ve painted everything from peaches to cats, waterspouts, cache vaches (knick knacks), landscapes, and portraits. I’ve also taken great pleasure in adding butterfly decals and Hello Kitty images to porta potties and dumpsters at construction sites in an effort to neutralize the graffiti on them.

My work has been included in exhibitions throughout the country, including the Tucson Museum of Art, Long Beach Museum of Art, Laguna Beach Museum of Art, Philbrook Museum of Art, Colorado College, Sun Valley Center for the Arts, Yuma Fine Art Center, Arizona Museum for Youth, McNay Art Museum, Arizona State University, and more.

In late 2013, just ahead of the 50th anniversary of the high school (1964), Gulf Park was on my mind, leading me to a search for a few old friends. Online, I found the newly formed alumni association, and Sidney Oliver’s contact info. I emailed her, she responded and asked where I was, what I was up to, etc. When I wrote back and told her I was living in Phoenix, she said, “Well, I don’t know why we’re emailing when we could be having a cup of coffee...” Turns out we had both been living in Phoenix for a good 15 years and lived less than 6 miles away from one another! What a crazy surprise. We met for lunch the next week, and spent a few hours laughing and filling one another in on our lives over the past 50 years. A short time later, Sid signed up for the watercolor course I teach, and she won’t say this, but I will – she’s one of the top painters in the class. To prove it, I’m going to insist the next newsletter has one of her paintings in it. Y’all need to see her work!

Our story is a reflection of the long lasting and valuable friendships formed at Gulf Park, and about how easy it is to pick up with a classmate right where things left off, no matter how much time has passed.

Joey Baker
Lucinda Cornish

I am fortunate to be included in the newsletter pertaining to GPC artists. I have recently retired from my work with Pirate’s Alley, a family-owned custom frame business in Oklahoma City. I worked there for 40 years, never really planning to retire. It was along my line of artwork, and I also learned some giclee printing there. But as much as I enjoyed it, it had been enough years for me. I had an opportunity to buy a home with my daughter and found myself moving to North Carolina. I am currently making my home in Gastonia, NC, and, of course, looking for an outlet for my art.

I completely loved and enjoyed my years at GPC (class of ’64 college). I had never seen a large body of water or such beautiful gigantic oak trees—especially our much-loved Friendship Oak. That was the allure for me, and the horses. I wasn’t aware at the time, but I was forging a deep bond with the South. If I had to pick a time in my life I felt was the most enjoyable, it would be those years. The friends I made there were amazing, and I am still in contact with some, and a few are gone now. Hard to believe. I can’t recall my art instructors’ names, but I did take the courses for my 2 years there. They introduced me to a lot of valuable tools and ideas to use afterwards.

So I continued to study, mostly on my own. There was an artist from California who was in Oklahoma City for a few years, and I suppose I shadowed him and received benefit of counsel for a while, but I just needed to study and figure it out for myself. Other than technique, I don’t believe art can be taught, and the value, for me, was in trial and error. It becomes a personal experience that I hope can be treasured at a later time. You have to work for yourself. I do better on my own. I married a couple of times, and had 4 wonderful daughters, tragically losing my youngest in 2008.

I have always loved flowers and nature. I am fascinated by the order and pattern of plants, the way they are constructed, their life cycles. Finally, I figured out to combine those interests, which led me to botanical art and the American Society of Botanical Artists (ASBA). https://www.asba-art.org/member-gallery/lucinda-cornish

I also have an Etsy site for my handmade greeting cards. They are great fun and a break from the more demanding botanical work. The handmade cards are on Etsy, under CornishHouse.

During my years at work, I have acquired a few followers, admirers, and collectors. Their appreciation is where I place value. I work in watercolor on Arches 300 lb hot press or cold press papers. I also do some small prints from photographic work, pushing the boundaries a bit and choosing to use art papers instead of traditional print paper. (The Japanese and gampi papers are especially interesting.) You will find these works on my website, www.LucindaCornish.com and at Artwork at Pirate’s Alley, Oklahoma City, and Artwork at The Arts on Main, in Shawnee, OK. (For a while, I was with Pickard Art gallery in Oklahoma City, and on the paseo at the In Your Eye gallery, also in Oklahoma City.)

Lucinda Cornish
Dora Hill Dillistone

It is difficult to distill the past fifty years of life into a brief paragraph, but I will touch on a few points that help describe my recent work.

After high school graduation in 1967, I was keenly aware that I wanted to study in a liberal arts program and Gulf Park was my stepping-stone to a life of learning. The focus was on art and Earle deVries along with Laura Wilkinson served as great mentors. But my favorite professor was Colonel Wink, who gave me such a love for history. 1968 and 1969 were critical years in American history and pivotal in my views and my future.

My husband Carl and I were married in 1969 when he returned unscathed from military service and we headed to Houston. I enrolled in the University of Houston where I graduated Magna Cum Laude in 1971. Other studies took me to Texas Tech and finally the Glassell Museum School in the pursuit of art and art history.

Carl and I began our travels to the southwest when I was studying art of the southwest. The museum school gave me the opportunity to study Asian ink processes and discuss contemporary art with numerous artists such as Christian Eckart and Larry Bell. In 2009, we relocated from the coastal plains to the high mountain desert of Taos, New Mexico.

Although my work has always been process driven, this move produced a profound shift in my thoughts and relationship to the environment. My current body of work began as an exploration of how to make art without “making art.” The elements of wind, rain and fire are so profound in Taos that they demand attention so I decided to let the landscape paint itself and I could conduct the symphony. The dirt drawings attempt to record an event and the delicate and spontaneous marks are fixed in time and space. These marks cannot be expected or duplicated. In the words of Heraclitus: “No man ever steps in the same river twice, for it’s not the same river and he’s not the same man.” The geographic coordinates where the paper is anchored by rocks are the works’ titles, so that the works also become maps of a location as well as a record of the event. The wind drawings record direction and movement of wind. Works that are damaged become burned paintings in a symbolic gesture to the constant threat of fire.

The work shown here is representative. It is composed of dirt with a small amount of fugitive ink dropped onto the wet surface and allowed to migrate through the dirt flow. I do not judge the work since technically I do not make it but just facilitate the flow around rocks and through natural erosion.

I am constantly reminded that art is not about the end result but about the journey towards its production. My art is in numerous private collections as well as part of the UNM Harwood Museum of Art permanent collection.

Dora Dillistone
Sandy B. Donn

Artist Sandy B. Donn pled an overwhelming workload, but kindly gave us permission to quote her sweet comment about GPC (1967-69), and to borrow a couple of paintings from her online venues. Please visit these sites to see more of her remarkable paintings and learn more about the artist herself.

“Gulf Park was where I found myself. Grateful beyond measure.”

Sandy now works exclusively in oil. For more about this American realist, see:

Linkedin
Website
Facebook
Etsy

Son and Moon

Moose
Diane Fulmer

I am in a panic about the hurricane and I may have to fly to NY earlier than I thought for my photo shoot in Mongolia, so this is the best I can do.

Graduated GPC (college) in 1965. I taught horseback riding for several years in Savannah (home town). In 2014 I volunteered for horse therapy for several years. I graduated from Nursing School in 1978, and worked as a PRN for 20 years. I began to study Dark Room Photography in 2007, and started the “end of life photography” program at Hospice Savannah in 2007.

I have studied photography at Armstrong Atlantic State University for 6 years. I have traveled to many places to photograph and as I mentioned, I will travel to the Gobi Desert in a few days to photograph. I photographed 52 yoga poses at Fort Pulaski for the book, Difference Between Pain and Suffering. At this time I am trying to master Platinum Palladium printing.

"Pending Storm" won the Lillian Spencer Award for best in all art categories, Tybee Island, GA

"Low Tide" is a Silver Gelatin Print, Tybee Island, GA

I have 3 children and 7 grandchildren. Divorced in 2014; engaged but never to marry at present!
Joann Myers

Joann Myers (1949-2015) received her Associate of Arts degree in 1970 from Gulf Park College, Long Beach, MS and her Bachelor of Arts degree in Fine Arts and Humanities from Brenau College, Gainesville, GA.

J. Myers’ art can be found in collections of individuals as well as numerous corporate collections. She has been nominated and awarded for many exhibitions throughout the United States and in several European countries since 1981.

In the case of one of the artist’s spiritportraits© Joanne interviewed the collector and interpreted their exchange with a portrait consisting of symbols and colors uniquely chosen for the collector. The portrait often revealed names, birthdates and events not discussed during the interview. Upon completion of a spiritportrait©, the collector was presented with an explanation of the colors and symbols as they applied to the collector.

In Joanne’s words, “I am fortunate to work as an Artist and to do the work I love. There are times when the work supports me, and times when I support the work. As in all things, I believe when we use the talents we are given, the support will always be there.”

Joann Myers
From Our Newest Scholarship Winner, Ashley LeBlanc

My education at Southern Miss Gulf Park has been life-changing in so many facets. Not only has it been redemptive of past mistakes, but it has given me a deeper foundation than I ever thought possible. Embarking on a journey like this always comes with risks, and one of the risks I faced was the financial stability of my home as I pursued my degree as a single mother. When I got the notice of a scholarship, it touched me mostly because I felt chosen. Somebody chose my story, my situation, my future, by recognizing the sacrifices I am making to better myself so I can better serve our community.

I started this journey with a passion; I continue this journey with determination; but, I am empowered in this journey by those who stand behind me. Thank you, Gulf Park College Alumnae Association, for standing behind me! Your incredibly generous donation to my education will be something I always have as a reminder as I continue to pursue excellence. Organizations such as yours do not just aid in a financial capacity, they build up people like me who sometimes need to know that resiliency is possible. It starts with a choice, but it is strengthened through encouragement. Thank you, Gulf Park College Alumnae Association, from the depths of my heart, for believing in me.

In Memoriam

- Mollis Jones, ’69, May 5, 2014
- Marcia Senger, ’51, January 13, 2018
- Beverley Ann Hatton, ’56HS, June 12, 2018
- Virginia Portis, ’36HS, June 3, 2018
- Susan K. Jaffe, ’69, June 3, 2008
- Susanna Pye, ’69, April 3, 2013
- Karalynn Walters, ’69, September 8, 2005
- Vicki Roth, ’66, May 8, 2018
- Kathleen Murphy, ’69, March 4, 1992
- Debra Bern, ’69
- Nancy Merritt, ’58, April 28, 2017
- India Pickron, ’65C, September 26, 2018

Tick Tock

The clock is ticking and the 2019 Reunion will be here (April 6-13, 2019) before you know it. Time to make your reservation!

We will be cruising to interesting and beautiful ports: San Juan, St. Thomas, Saint Kitts, Antigua, Saint Lucia, and Barbados. You will be able to take advantage of not just one but two free perks. Choose from the Classic Beverage Package, Unlimited Wi-Fi, Prepaid Tips, or $150 to spend on board. If you are not interested in the perks, you can take the Over 50 discount to save on your fare.

This is a wonderful opportunity for the class of 69 to celebrate their big 50th Anniversary, and for their sistahs to join the party! We already have 16 cabins reserved. If you want a roommate, contact Virginia Roper at vaesl@mac.com. To make your reservation, call 888-727-4907 EXT 13602 for Gulf Park Sails–Group Number 1733309. Once you have made your reservation, let Virginia know and you will receive copies of the Reunion News with cruise information and updates. Looking forward to meeting you onboard!
This and That

- **Paid your dues?** If you haven’t paid your 2018 dues, do it now! Make your $25 check payable to Gulf Park Alumnae Association, Inc., and mail it to Treasurer Marcia Burnham Klosterman at 1065 Mockingbird Lane, Van Wert, Ohio 45891. Any amount over $25 will go to the Scholarship Fund and can be deducted on your income tax return.

- **In memoriam?** Know of an alum or faculty member who has passed away? Please notify Judy Shafer Williams at judithswilliams@aol.com or 251 Beachview Drive, Ft. Walton Beach, FL 32547.

- **Change of mailing address, phone or email address?** Don’t let us lose you! Notify Judith Shafer Williams at 251 Beachview Dr, Fort Walton Beach, FL 32547, judithswilliams@aol.com, Cell phone 850-621-5646.

- **Got something to say, or a personal update?** We want your comments and your stories! Please send your comments to Jane Sidney Oliver, Oak Leaf editor, at 54dobes489daze@gmail.com or 2844 East Weldon Avenue, Phoenix, AZ 85016.

- **Should we send a note?** Please contact Lonnie McConnell, “Sunshine Lady,” at 26514 Fielder Brook Lane, Katy, TX 7794 or lonrog02@consolidated.net if congratulations or condolences are in order.