

April 12 2007

Mr. Don Taylor SW President  
3416 West Highway 390  
Panama City, Florida

Dear Don Taylor

Congratulation on your election as new president of The Southern Watercolor Society. You have a lot of courage taking on such a big job. I'm really impressed, watching the progress of the SW down through the years and quite frankly it has accomplished much more than I had anticipated on the front end in such a short time. Lots of good people there. The new show and catalog are both absolutely beautiful. The work in the catalogue is fantastic – I was more impressed with it than the last several AWS and NWS catalogues. Of course, I also happened to see your exciting "Angles and Arches" and it's play with light ... and, the big check mark grabs a viewer.

I can not believe it has been over thirty years already since that first day in Memphis. Quite a few years ago I sent information as to how the SW came about prior to that first gathering. I'm not sure that it reached the persons responsible for the SW history so I thought that I would send this just in case it got lost or was not passed along in all the information that has been passed to you. At the time we had a professional watercolor group limited to 12 to 15 members. We called ourselves The Memphis Watercolor Group. Some time in the 1960s I had seen and read about a group of this sort in New England comprised of the same numbers of painters. I knew most of the painters in Memphis and some others in the Tennessee Watercolor Society. During one of our W/C meetings I presented the idea of starting a "SWS" and most everyone agreed to help. I had been the co-founder (1970 – 1971) and first president of the TWS and felt this would give me a bit of influence in getting it started when contacting southern watercolor painters in forming a Southern Watercolor Society. I had been working to become a member of the AWS and had all the catalogues for many years. I had gotten a mailer printed and sent a copy to every painter in the AWS catalog living in the southern states. It announced that meeting to be held in Memphis.

Coincidentally, I had just come across the included announcement several weeks ago, prior to receiving the catalog of your recent show. This is the only one remaining and a miracle that it exists at all after a small studio fire in 2004 that took me a year to remodel and save most of the paintings and paper items. I remember now that this notice was sopping wet and came out of a pile of wet dry-wall. This notice did the trick though for enough people responded to get the SW started. I had every intention of having to spearhead the first year but circumstances intervened.

My wife Peggy "Patch" Williamson and I had visited kin in Arizona a few times previous to this and we decided to retire here. We had a gallery in Mps. on going at the time for five years. We had a small business loan and at about the time that the above SW announcements were sent out the bank called in all it's small business loans. This was unsettling, to say the least, especially after a couple of weeks later we get an advertisement from them wanting our business by taking out a loan. That did it! We closed the gallery and sold the house and deciding to move the Golden Fleece Art Gallery (open for a total of 17 years) to AZ earlier than planned.

John Wilkinson, Georg Shook (an excellent friend to lose), Marvin Yates, Dave Patterson, Connie Hendrix, Paul Brown, Don Carmichel, Marjorie Schwartz and the other group painters had backed me up and I had to prevail upon them to keep the idea of a SW alive. And that they did! Peg and I attended that first meeting at the motel and sat in the back and those good friends took over and organized the room full of attendees into the SW. As I recall, we took off for AZ in a couple of days for we had to get out of the sold house..

Again, good luck with the SW.

Respectfully



Jason Williamson