

# Redlands Daily Facts

By **REDLANDS DAILY FACTS** | [redlands@dfmdev.com](mailto:redlands@dfmdev.com) |

The Redlands Historical Museum has received a sought-after piece of artwork by longtime Redlands artist Bee Walsh.

Walsh had dropped from sight from the Inland area after 30 years of artistic leadership, particularly as founder of the Fine Arts Institute at the San Bernardino County Museum.

The whole mission to locate Walsh and possibly obtain one of her paintings for the Redlands Historical Museum collection resulted from a photographic project my husband Monte Stuck and I did of the A.K. Smiley Public Library art holdings three years ago. The Redlands Art Association had asked for a program on the artwork in the museum collection. Since the museum works under the aegis of the Smiley Library board, we could see a double benefit of photographing every art piece in storage.

The several days of photographing and measuring the artwork in storage brought to light some prominent artists in more recent years in Redlands who were missing from the collection. There were no paintings by Bee Walsh, probably one of the most prolific and enthusiastic artists in Our Town from the 1970s on.

But how to locate her? We began by asking several fellow artists from the Redlands Art Association. One or two remembered she had moved from Redlands after the death of her husband, James Walsh, to be with her daughter in Orange County. That phone number and address proved fruitless this past year. Only by Milson entering the Aberle name in the Internet did their Reno address turn up.

As Redlands Daily Facts community and the arts editor for more than 20 years, I could count on Bee to keep me posted on various art events at the San Bernardino County Museum's Fine Arts Institute, with Redlands Art Association, through her work on the Redlands Cultural Arts Commission, and other local happenings. She knew how to make sure I had the information to keep the public informed.

She often taught classes, especially on her original method of liquid watercolors of various densities which she spooned onto large watercolor papers.

She once described these paintings for an upcoming exhibit by saying she never knew what size the painting would be or what the subject matter might turn out to be. Sometimes she painted an emotion, and sometimes the color was the most important aspect of the scene.

She felt that there could be many focal points rather than one center of attention.

"The overall intrinsic embroidery demands your investigation," she said. "Careful study of the beautiful textures and shapes occupies the viewer at length."

She would sometimes use as models some of the county museum birds, and her most remembered artworks include her "Great Horned Owl on Patrol," koi fish in a feeding frenzy, and her historic structures in Redlands such as the Morey House and the Lincoln Shrine. Some of these were printed as foldover greeting cards.

She was a member of Watercolor West, Women Painters West, the National League of American Pen Women (winning several national awards), and the Riverside Art Museum, where she was featured in a one-artist show.

She was art exhibits coordinator at the San Bernardino County Museum where she was a volunteer for more than 20 years, and her work was honored with a two-woman show there. She served on the board of directors for the Arts Foundation of San Bernardino County and the San Bernardino County Museum Association.

She gave several one-woman shows at Crafton Hills College Library and received the Arrowhead Allied Arts Council Inland Empire Award for her services to the arts.

Her painting of Kimberly Crest was featured in color in the Redlands Daily Facts Redlands Centennial Celebration special edition. At least one of her shows featured sites from her travels, including three months with Singapore as home base, the Baltic countries, travel trailering thousands of miles in Mexico and across Canada, and photographing and painting Indian country of the Southwest.

"My paintings all tell a story, and I seem to have more to say with every painting," she said. "Some of my paintings may make a social statement, but it would be gentle. I believe that life and art should be beautiful and reflect hope.

"I don't think that anyone else surveying my art, could ever feel the quiet joy that settles over me when I smell the paint, and pick up a brush, and begin again. It is the greatest form of expression. Just paint your cares away, relax, and create your own heaven on earth."

Supporters of the Redlands Historical Museum can donate items by contacting associate archivist Nathan Gonzales in the A.K. Smiley Public Library Heritage Room, 909-798-7632.

Nelda Stuck is president of the Redlands Historical Museum Association.