

Don Dane – artist

This is Kansas Profile. I'm Ron Wilson, director of the Huck Boyd National Institute for Rural Development at Kansas State University.

San Dimas, California. An art show is underway. Among the beautiful works of art on display is a painting by an artist from halfway across the continent in Kansas. It's an example of the beautiful color and realism with which this artist depicts rural life. This is today's Kansas Profile.

Don Dane is this artist whose artwork has traveled across the country. His home and studio are in Olathe, Kansas.

Don grew up in rural Missouri where his father was a Baptist minister and served various small churches around the Ozark region. Within the family home, his mother nurtured high moral standards which Don has carried forward with him.

As a child, Don liked to draw and he took art classes in high school. After attending technical college, he got a job with United Telephone – now Sprint – in design and drafting and ultimately became a telephone engineer.

In 1982, Sprint transferred Don from Jefferson City, Missouri to the Kansas City area. Don and his family eventually settled in Olathe. He enjoyed going to the many arts and craft shows around there and decided to try selling some artwork himself.

His original medium was graphite pencil but eventually he transitioned to watercolor and oil. He depicted all types of subjects. "I painted anything and everything, but I liked the rustic subjects the best," he said.

Then Don visited the National Cowboy and Western Heritage Museum in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma and was very impressed with the western-themed art work that he saw, produced by the very finest western artists. After visiting a rodeo school near Olathe, he decided to focus on cowboy and western art.

In the late 1980s Don began to concentrate on his art career. In 2002 he retired from Sprint so as to devote fulltime to his artistic pursuit. He is a self-taught artist, although he has participated in professional workshops and art classes from Johnson County Community College and the Scottsdale Art School. He has worked with artists such as Michael Swearngin and watercolorist William Matthews from Denver.

Today Don Dane has become widely known for his portrayals of the American West, cowboys and the rural way of life. In fact, his artwork has been part of art shows from Kentucky to California. He produced cover artwork for Cowboy magazine and has been included in ARTBOOK of the New West, Western Horseman, American Cowboy, Southwest Art, Western Art Collector magazine and more.

Don has received numerous awards, such as first place for painting at shows in Olathe, Kansas City and Winfield. He received the Award of Excellence in Lincoln, Nebraska.

In 2011, Don was commissioned by the state of Kansas through the Kansas Lottery Commission to create a painting representative of the state's 150th anniversary. The painting image was then printed onto one of the Kansas Lottery's tickets. The original painting is part of the second chance prize to be awarded to the winning ticket.

One of Don's specialties is developing custom posters for special events. Those occasions have included events at Pigeon Forge, Tennessee; Silver Dollar City in Branson, Missouri; Cal Farley's Boys Ranch in Texas and several locations around

Kansas. One of those was a cowboy gathering at the rural community of Alma, Kansas, population 1,504 people. Now, that's rural.

He enjoys visiting working ranches and taking photos of cowboys at work, which enables him to paint those scenes from the photo references. He has visited the Pitchfork Ranch and the Four Sixes Ranch in Texas plus Rod Moyer's ranch near Junction City. "I find the cattle ranches provide what I call a one-stop-shop of everything I look for in authenticity," Don said. He focuses mainly on western-themed subjects but does not limit himself to only the western genre.

For more information on his fine art, go to www.dondane.com.

San Dimas, California. Here at the 35th National Western Art Exhibition and Sale, we find artwork by Don Dane from halfway across the continent in Olathe, Kansas. We commend Don Dane for making a difference by using his creative talents to depict and celebrate the rural way of life. His talent is literally a work of art.

For the Huck Boyd National Institute for Rural Development, this is Ron Wilson with Kansas Profile.