



WESTERN ARTISTS OF AMERICA
DEDICATED TO AMERICA'S WESTERN HERITAGE

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A Presentation of

The Lifetime Achievement Award to

Kenneth M. Freeman

(1935 – 2008)

It is through the efforts of Ken's wife, Bonnie Adams Freeman, that we are proud to present this award to Kenneth M. Freeman at the World Premiere of the Kenneth M. Freeman Legacy Exhibition at the Booth Western Art Museum in Cartersville, Georgia.

It was an honor to count Ken Freeman among the members of Western Artists of America. Unlike many of us, Ken was blessed at an early age to recognize his artistic talent. His mother saw his talent when Ken was just six years old. By the time Ken was eight years old, he announced he was going to become a cowboy and great western artist.

Ken was a commercial illustrator in the Chicago area for twenty years. He worked with Haddon Sundblom on many advertising campaigns of the time.

But with Ken's move from Chicago to Scottsdale, his dream became reality. He lived the life of a cowboy riding horses, going on cattle drives, becoming a Buffalo Soldier and attending the ceremonies of Native Americans. He did achieve his goal of becoming a great western artist. Ken painted working cowboys and cowgirls, rodeo heroes, Native American elders & children, mountain men, Western landscapes, and Buffalo Soldiers. as well as depicting the American cowboy and his surroundings, especially the rodeo. Capturing the rich heritage of the many varied peoples he encountered in the American West, Ken Freeman brought the personalities of these models to life.

Ken's *old masters' technique* was very time consuming but the outcome is extraordinary. It is the only way to achieve the depth of colors and warm layers of content that will pass the test of time. He would slowly build the good foundation of a painting through charcoal pencil sketches, then underpainting with burnt umber, and finally add the thin color glazes to achieve the final result. This painting technique will last for hundreds of years



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Ken's list of collectors of his western artwork was numerous to say the least ... and notable to say the best. They included a president, Herbert Hoover, prominent church leaders, heads of major corporation, actors like John Wayne and Robert Fuller, and country western singers such as Waylon Jennings and Ray Herndon.

Works of Kenneth M. Freeman are in the permanent collection of the Smithsonian Museum, Library of Congress, American Art Academy, and Booth Museum as well as distinguished private collections. Accolades include winning competitions at the San Diego Museum of Art, the Hubbard Museum of Art, the Illinois State Fair, the *Salmagundi Show* in New York City, the Union League Club of Chicago, being chosen five times as artist for the Parada Del Sol Rodeo in Scottsdale, AZ and having a painting selected for the 1988 Prescott Centennial Rodeo.

He was an illustrator for authors like Louis L'Amour and Will James.

One of the endearing traits of Kenneth M. Freeman, and perhaps the noblest of all, was his undaunting love and spirit to paint regardless of his health issues. It was always a pleasure to visit Ken in his studio. Just seeing him go about creating another masterpiece ... oblivious to any discomfort he might be experiencing ... the gleam in his eye and the excitement in his voice as he spoke about his current project or the next one he had in mind was exemplary. Such is the way of a great talent.

While Kenneth M. Freeman is no longer with us, his legacy of the great American West lives on for all to enjoy and inspire.

Thank you, Ken.

Ed Holmes, Founder & President of Western Artists of America

Ed Copley, Founder of Western Artists of America