

Renowned Kentucky artist Fred Thrasher passes away



Fred Thrasher is shown holding one of the many prints he sold during his 35 plus year long career as an artist in Kentucky. Thrasher passed away July 17th at the age of 83.

EDITOR'S NOTE- Many Russell Countians own, or have wanted to have a Fred Thrasher print hanging on their wall. In his heralded career, Mr. Thrasher wonderfully documented Russell County icons such as Rock House, or the riverboat days in his popular "Crossing the Cumberland."

By Chelsea Thrasher (Courtesy Clinton County News)

After a short illness, Kentucky artist Fred Thrasher passed at the age of 83 from a long, hard-fought battle with end-stage COPD, complicated by a recent fight with COVID-19, surrounded by loved ones.

The legendary local artist from Clinton County, whose works depicted the America of yesterday seen through the eyes of today, was a fixture of the art community for decades, with his final work coming in 2014.

Needing to support his growing family – his childhood sweetheart Betty, as well as his six children – he initially began in the insurance business, after a short time working at the Bowling Green 7-Up plant, followed by a move to Indiana.

Home would call, and he would return to Kentucky to set up shop in Clinton County.

At the time of his licensure, he was the youngest agent to become licensed in the Commonwealth of Kentucky.

A 1967 ad would prove life-changing, however.

As explained in the Lexington Herald-Leader in 1978, at the start of his success, "I picked up a magazine one day which had one of those 'Draw Me' ads. I drew the deer and sent it off to the Washington School of Art. A scholarship to a correspondence course would soon follow."

After several years of pursuing art as a hobby and occasionally to augment his insurance sales, he decided to pursue art full time.

Starting with a commission for the local Clinton County High School, he sold 1,000 copies for \$10 each.

The original run of 1,000 prints was sold across 28 states, and one was even sold to a man in Saudi Arabia.

To illustrate the kind of man he was, on the eve of his own departure from the insurance business to go into art, he ran a quarter-page ad in the Clinton County News in July of 1977 to thank those who had bought insurance from him – and those who hadn't – to give his replacement his full vote of confidence, and to thank his competitors.

To his last days, Fred viewed everyone as a friend – even if just a friend he hadn't met yet.

With that, a career was born – but first, inspiration was needed. When asked later how he decided on

what to paint, he told the story "I was driving home and stopped off at a stream to get a drink of water. I just looked around at how beautiful it was and thought this would be a painting I'd buy and would put in my house."

The themes of nature, of home, and of times gone-by and our own fond recollections of them would go on to span across hundreds of paintings.

Certain themes would be revisited, often with a seasonal flair – the same setting would be revisited across all four seasons, showing both the passage of time, but also how each season affords its setting its own specific charm and beauty.

His "four seasons" collections would become some of his most prized works.

Describing his art, he once noted, "With all the traffic and busy hustle of daily life, I feel that if I can take someone back to a place that's full of peaceful memories, even just for 5 or 10 minutes, I've accomplished something."

For the next 35 years he would travel around, visiting and working with galleries, studios, festivals, state fairs, and conventions to forge the relationships that would make his art a success and build the connections with those who enjoyed his work that, in many ways, was the true gift of his art career.

Success, at first, was not a guarantee.

Although his initial paintings and sketches had done well, art was a notoriously tough career to make a living in – and Fred had six kids and a wife to thank about.

When his career began, he promised his wife that if the change to art wasn't putting food on the table and a roof over their heads within two years, he'd

give it up and go back to insurance.

He never sold insurance again, and four and a half decades later his art hangs on the walls of at least some homes in every state in this country and quite a few other countries as well.

On the eve of his retirement, when asked to look back on his success, he merely noted with his characteristic humility that "It's truly been an honor for people to enjoy my art enough to be willing to buy it and hang it in their homes" – and noting that "I can never repay what a privilege it's been."

Although he felt he could never repay that, he nonetheless tried.

Multiple print profits were donated to various charitable goals both national and local.

For a time, prints were also sold to benefit activities for each year's graduating class at Clinton County High School.

He was also a firm believer in the power of everyone to create, and that absolutely everyone possessed at least some degree of creative talent, noting both that "If you eat, sleep, and breathe something,

you'll become good at it," and that "talent is developed from the outcome of being obsessed about whatever skill you want to learn."

Routinely, even into his later days as an artist, if a guest at a festival booth replied with the familiar "I could never do that," he'd pull out of sheet of paper, and by the time they were done, that person would have drawn their first sketch.

Later in life, he'd occasionally get a sketch – or photograph – from a fan of his work who had noted that he had inspired them too to see the beauty in life.

Fred Thrasher was preceded in death by two sons (Donnie and Danny).

He is survived by the love of his life Betty, by four sons (Ronnie, Dennis, Jeff, and Freddie) and a daughter (Margaret), and by countless grandchildren and great-grandchildren, who will treasure their time on Earth with him and the lessons and stories learned from him, and the love shown to not only the family, but to everyone, no matter who they were – for all eternity.

The family thanks and appreciates everyone for their love and support.

(Chelsea Thrasher, author of the preceding article, is a granddaughter of Fred Thrasher.)

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Community Health Screening

Russell County Hospital is offering health screenings beginning August 1, 2022 thru August 12, 2022.

Please check the schedule below for your screening date. No Saturday or Sunday draws

\$15.00

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- Complete Blood Count
- Chemistry Profile (Includes glucose)
- Lipid Profile (Includes cholesterol)
- Thyroid Profile

\$10.00

{

Prostate Cancer Screening (PSA Blood Work)
Men Only

For the best possible results, you need to be **FASTING** before having your blood drawn. **DO NOT** eat or drink after midnight before your screening date.

1st Letter of Last Name	Screening Date
A, B	Monday, Aug 1
C, D, E, F	Tuesday, Aug 2
G, H, I	Wednesday, Aug 3
J, K, L	Thursday, Aug 4
M, N, O	Friday, Aug 5
P, Q, R	Monday, Aug 8
S, T, U, V	Tuesday, Aug 9
W, X, Y, Z	Wednesday, Aug 10
Open	Thursday, Aug 11
Open	Friday, Aug 12

Location: Russell Springs Elementary School
1554 US-127 (child pick-up entrance)
Time: 7:00 AM- 9:00 AM
For more information call (270) 866-4141 ext. 512

There may be a wait. Please sign-in upon arrival. You will be called in the order of the sign-in sheet.

Lab results will be ready for pick-up on August 26, 2022 at Russell Co. Hospital Entrance #3. If results are not picked up, they will be mailed to the address listed on the registration form.

RCPL Con this weekend

Calling all fans!

Enjoy a jam-packed day of sessions, cosplay, trivia, photo opportunities, and more at RCPL Con at the Russell County Public Library.

Fans of Disney, Star Wars, Marvel, and other pop culture icons will find many things to enjoy at this mini convention this Saturday, July 30th from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

For children, character storytimes will take place throughout the event, allowing little ones a chance to interact with some of their

favorite princesses, superheroes, and more.

Twins, teens, and adults can learn new things and showcase their knowledge at info and trivia sessions based around anime, videogames, and other fandom-inspired topics.

There will also be a wide variety of vendors set up throughout the event including representatives from Lemonjuice McGee's Comic Cavalcade, Midnight in Kentucky Podcast, Triple Crown Wrestling, and Player 1 Gaming, among others.

For more information about RCPL Con, visit the library to pick up a schedule of events or access a digital version at russellcountylibrary.com About RCPL:

The Russell County Public Library endeavors to inform, enrich, and empower the community by creating and promoting easy access to a vast array of ideas, knowledge, and information, and by supporting an informed citizenry, lifelong learning, and love of reading. Visit www.russellcountylibrary.com for more information.