

## **Jane Hirt McKinley**

Jane Hirt McKinley has been blessed with a very interesting and productive life. She was born in Houston, Texas but since her father was in the Air Force, she had the opportunity to travel extensively. Her father was stationed outside of Paris, France during her early childhood. This allowed Jane to be exposed to the cathedrals, mountains, museums, and other historical landmarks in Europe. While attending second grade in France, she knew she wanted to pursue a career in art. Her parents and teachers encouraged her. A French underground artist during WWII, who recorded war-time events with extensive sketches, Monsieur Mason, even took interest in her talents at a very young age.

Heredity also played an important part in her life of creativity. Her great-aunt and grandmother collectively were a fashion designer, milliner and poet. It was from this family background she inherited her flare for color, design ability, and visual perception and of course perseverance on her part.

In high school, Jane entered art shows and worked with the drama department on set design. She furthered her studies in college going to Sam Houston State College. Ultimately, she received her BS in Art Education at the University of Houston.

Putting her degree to work, she became a public school art teacher. For the next 30 years, she passed along her knowledge and talents to her students. She introduced them to a variety of materials, processes, and techniques. She helped to motivate them and stimulate their creative juices. She enriched their lives through the study of Art History.

One of the most rewarding experiences in her career was instructing the visually handicapped and hearing-impaired students. Their accomplishments and need to express themselves amazed her. They helped her to reach a better understanding of the personal dimension of feeling, sensitivity, empathy, and expression.

Now retired, Jane pursues her second dream of being a full-time artist, with the support of family and friends. She now has the time to paint. She works in and out of her studio on residential murals, painting in all media, and teaching private lessons to both adults and children. She has taken summer classes at Texas Tech in Junction, Texas. She has studied under Arthur Turner at Glassell as well as other artists; Soon Warren, Lian Quan Zhen, Tom Jones, and Karen Vernon to name a few. She shows her art at the Downtown Art Gallery in Brenham, Texas and art shows around the Texas area.