

BIOGRAPHY - George Tapley

I had my first art lesson at age 8 in Juneau, Alaska, on how to draw a row boat. Soon afterwards I drew my first comic book - a superhero, called Captain Dynamo, modeled after Batman. I especially enjoyed designing his car, which was amphibious and could convert into an airplane. At age 10, I won my first prize in a student art show sponsored by the Boston Globe. It was an ink drawing of figures in an ice skating rink.

In school I took art classes at every opportunity. In college I took painting, studied art history, and majored in art as an undergraduate. I went on to earn three advanced degrees, and eventually taught art and art history at the college level. My first love has always been painting. Now that I am retired, I paint almost every day. With an occasional detour - such as a series of satirical paintings of Mickey Mouse - my subjects have mostly been traditional: figure, still life, landscape, scenes of everyday life.

Although landscape painting in plein air style is my current preoccupation, it is not new to me. I've painted outdoors in New Hampshire, in Minnesota, and in Louisiana as well as Northern California.

I had been painting outdoors at the Arboretum in Fullerton for several years when I met up with a member of Socalpapa. Since February I have enjoyed traveling around to the various parks in Orange County and meeting up with others of this amiable group to paint the beautiful natural scenery of Southern California. In my recent landscape paintings I seek to capture the quality of light, the sense of luminous space, the colors and textures of Southern California. Rather than copy literally what I see before me, I prefer to suggest with impressionistic brushstroke in touches of warm and cool tones, the play of light and shadow, the time of day, or even the warmth of the sun as it reflects off eroded rocks or dry river beds. Looking at the distant mountains and learning to paint what I see as a series of pale tones of lavender or indigo in contrast with the bolder tones of nearby trees is a challenge that I along with other plein air painters enjoy.