

James Boren

James Boren (1920-1990)

A noted watercolor painter of western scenes and member of the Cowboy Artists of America, James Boren was born in Waxahatchie, Texas, the son of a minister. He knew as a teenager that he wanted to be an illustrator, but his schooling at Southwestern College was interrupted by military service in the Marines. After the war, in 1951, he earned his M. F. A. from the Kansas City Art Institute and then taught for two years at St. Mary's College.

With his earnings, he traveled the Southwest and also painted in Alaska, and in 1956 moved to Denver, Colorado where he worked as a concept illustrator for the Martin Company. In 1959, he began selling cowboy paintings, and in 1964, he became Art Director of the Cowboy Hall of Fame in Oklahoma City. Among the masterpieces of early western art, he was inspired to pursue his own fine art ambitions, although he greatly enjoyed his job, as he was able to meet so many of the artists he admired. The Young association of western artists, the Cowboy Artists of America, exhibited annually at the Cowboy Hall. Boren was given membership in the group, first exhibiting in 1969, selling thirty-eight of forty paintings. This success gave him the confidence he needed to paint full-time. Soon after, Boren gave up his position as art director and devoted himself to painting. He has been the dominant force in the field of western watercolor ever since.

Boren and his work have served the cause of introducing art to a broad audience of people who were once intimidated by an elite art establishment. There was nothing pedantic about Boren, and open, honest man, and those qualities are reflected in his work.

During his career, Boren was named Texas State Artist of the Year, and as a member of the Cowboy Artists of America, won the gold medal in watercolor seven times. He felt that the cowboy has the star role in the drama of the West – the most beautiful country anywhere, sentiments shown in his biography, which was published in 1968 and titled James Boren: A Study in Discipline.

#7 Lufkin City Hall – “Moonlight Rendezvous” 1971 Oil on canvas, Two cowboys in front of ranch house in moonlight.

#11 Lufkin City Hall – “The Wrangler” – 1972, Charcoal cowboy holding a rope. Signed.

#27 Lufkin City Hall – Watercolor on paper. Landscape with deserted shacks. Rock fence in foreground. Signed