

JIM MILLER— HIS LIFE AND HIS ART



Presented by

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Walking into Jim Miller's house and studio outside Wilson is like walking into a fine western art gallery. Featured are many of Jim's sculptures and paintings, along with artwork from some of those whom Jim has mentored over the years, as well as from contemporaries. Those fortunate to have seen his "art gallery" and/or own some of Jim's sculptures or paintings know the beauty, wonder and timelessness Jim brings to his work.

Jim was born in South Dakota in 1924; shortly thereafter his family moved to Missouri and then to Oklahoma. He grew up in the Osage cattle country near Pawhuska and was inspired by this rough and tumble area as well as the Osage Indians.



When Jim was six years old one of his teachers thumb-tacked a drawing of his to the blackboard. Throughout his school years he liked to draw and was constantly getting in trouble for drawing horses on his test papers.

Jim entered the Navy during World War II and after the war moved to Colorado where he worked in the coal mines, in timber and on ranches. While working one day a tree fell on him and broke his back. While he was recuperating he went to school to learn how to do leather work. During his time in Colorado Jim's mother sent him a painting set; it was then he became serious about oil painting.

Moving back to Oklahoma in the early to mid 1950's Jim continued to paint for about 15 years while working full-time in the oil industry. This was followed by a couple of years as a sign painter. For twenty years after Jim began painting he gave his paintings away. Jim says "I didn't know you could sell them."



During this time he went to an art show where some artists were displaying bronze sculptures. Jim asked how he could get

some clay to see if he could create bronze sculptures. The artist gave him some clay—and Jim’s career as a sculptor was launched.

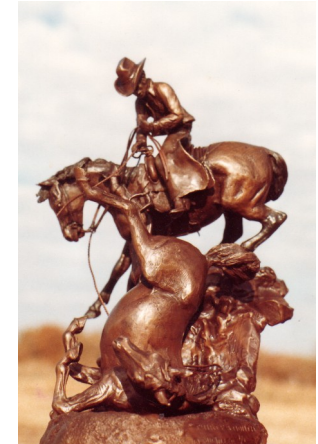
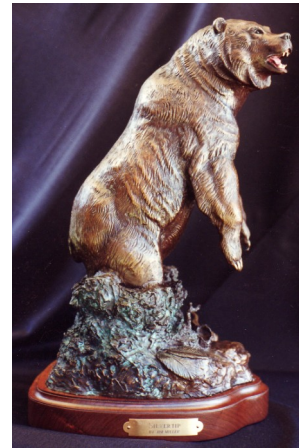


In 1973 he quit his job and began making his living in art. While drawing is a big part of Jim’s life, sculpture is his true love. His first sculpture, of a horse and rider entitled “Down to Earth,” took nine months to complete. Since then Jim has created many bronze sculptures—some small pieces but many that are large and intricate. According to Jim “each piece should tell a story.”

Jim begins a bronze piece by first sculpting it, using clay and creating a wax mold. The work is then poured at a local foundry. After the piece is cast, he may add coloring or details, such as spurs or rope. Jim says, “Sculpture is a matter of feeling. When I start a sculpture I know what it will look like when it is finished.” Jim Miller’s work has been exhibited widely throughout the southwest. His bronze sculptures and authentic western scenes in oils are included in collections in the United States and throughout the world. In recent years Jim has focused on one-of-a-kind pieces, although he continues to produce sculptures and paintings for his personal enjoyment and for collectors—when they want a special piece.



What might be work to others has been the joy of Jim’s life. As he said a few years ago “This is like a hobby. If I weren’t doing this for a living, I would do it for fun!” Jim’s fun has resulted in hundreds of sculptures and paintings that have captured the heritage of the southwest. Whether of cowboys, horses or other animals, Indians, fish, or some other subject, Jim’s work provides enjoyment and memories that reach far beyond his “art galley” located outside of Wilson.



The Wilson Historical Museum is an all-volunteer 501(c)3 organization dedicated to preserving the past and promoting the future of Wilson and the surrounding area

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