

Don Hummel



[Oregon State University](#)

"There are painters who transform the sun to a yellow spot, but there are others who, with the help of their art and their intelligence, transform a yellow spot into the sun." Pablo Picasso

Don Frazier Hummel, a wildlife artist, was born on Aug. 7, 1945, and passed away on Sept. 9, 2016, in Saint Mary's Medical Center in Reno, Nev., after a lengthy illness. He was 71. His life's work was being a wildlife artist and photographer of the Klamath Basin and later on in Alaska and Nevada. After growing up in Klamath Falls and Rocky Point, the influence of the beauty of this area and its wildlife and Don's love for it are evident in his art. Friends said that "Don was a brilliant and gifted artist. The Klamath Basin was his passion and he painted wildlife and could capture the Klamath County landscape equally as well." Gene Favell commented that, during this period, "Don was a genius when portraying birds and animals." Don graduated from Klamath Union High School in 1963 and attended Oregon State University for one year. After that, he was employed in a study on Upper Klamath Lake and mentored by Dave Vincent. Don then joined the Marine Corps in 1966 and was deployed to Vietnam in July of that year as a forward air control, calling in air strikes. In January 1967, he was seriously wounded and spent several months in hospitals in DaNang, Okinawa and Bremerton, Wash., being treated for severe burns and shrapnel wounds. He wrote of using chopsticks pushed up the bandages to guide his burned hands to paint from memory the wildlife images of his beloved Eastern Oregon Desert. "It was an effective therapy that began a dream to be my own person - an artist and photographer the rest of my life to overcome the war and deadly jet strikes I called in." After returning to Klamath Falls, Don became involved with the creation of the Favell Museum, which opened in 1972. Some of his work remains there and is in private collections. He received the Favell Museum Western Heritage Award in 1981 in recognition of his "ability to portray on canvas the beauty of the Klamath Country and its waterfowl." In 1973, Don married Valerie Hodges after moving to Rocky Point once more. In 1976, Shawn Hummel was born. He survives and lives in Boise, Idaho. Shawn has a son, Gunnar Hummel, Don's grandson. Don remarried in the 1980s to Vickie Gallagher, an artist who collaborated with Don on many artworks. In 1991, Don fulfilled a dream by moving to Alaska. He loved painting the wildlife and photographing the beauty of Alaska. After settling in Anchorage, due to poor eyesight, he developed a new artwork in creating birch bark canoes and canoe sculptures, which were unique to him. Being nocturnal, another activity he loved was donning chest waders and going around Anchorage at night on "moose patrol," photographing the local moose that had moved to town during the winter months. After 15 years and increasing health problems, Don left Alaska and moved to Reno, where he lived until his

death. His dream was to start painting again and was setting up easels and mapping out future paintings when he became seriously ill and bedridden. He was cared for and loved by friends Audrey Bradley and Brady Cartwright of Reno. Don's legacy will live on through his art, photography and writing as well as his son, Shawn, and grandson, Gunnar. Brother, David Hummel, and his son, Quinn, and sister, Jennifer Miller and her husband Norm, also survive. He was preceded in death by his father, Donald Hummel and mother Reba G. Hummel. Don is also remembered by lifelong friends Dwight Schuh and Jim Williams.

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