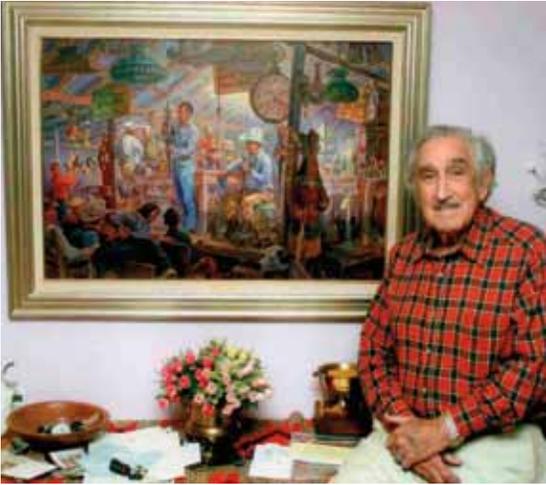


OKLAHOMA PAINTER



CHARLES BANKS WILSON in his home in Fayetteville, Arkansas, in 2007



CHARLES BANKS WILSON (left) works with his mentor, **THOMAS HART BENTON**, on a mural for the Truman Library in Independence, Missouri.

Charles Banks Wilson was born in Arkansas on August 6, 1918, and his family eventually moved to Miami, Oklahoma, where he spent his childhood. A painter, printmaker, teacher, lecturer, historian, magazine and book illustrator, Wilson's work has been shown in more than 200 exhibitions in the United States and across the globe.

Permanent collections of Wilson's work are housed in some of the most renowned museums and art galleries in the world. These include New York's Metropolitan Museum, Washington's Library of Congress, the Corcoran Gallery, the Oklahoma State Capitol, and the Smithsonian.

Wilson enrolled in the Chicago Art Institute in 1937 to study painting, watercolor and lithography. He obtained an apprenticeship as an illustrator at the *Chicago Tribune*, and contributed to a folio for the American Art Association. Many of Wilson's works hang in the Oklahoma State Capitol including life-sized portraits of Will Rogers, Sequoyah, Carl Albert, and Senator Robert Kerr. Four other murals depicting Oklahoma history also hang under the Capitol dome.

In addition to being the author and editor of a standard work on the Indian Tribes of Eastern Oklahoma, he is also the illustrator of 22 books and has contributed illustrations to many more.

Children attending Oklahoma schools studied from a history textbook that contained more than 50 of his drawings. His works are included in prize-winning books like the classic *Treasure Island*, *Company of Adventurers*, *Henry's Lincoln*, and *Mustangs*. Writers have said that the paintings by Charles Banks Wilson breathe the spirit of the southwest. Commissioned by John D. Rockefeller, Jr. in 1995, Wilson's mural, *The Trapper's Bride*, is among the most celebrated records of the American West's fur trade.

Wilson's famous portrait sitters include U.S. House Speaker Carl Albert, whose portrait is the first to hang in the National Portrait Gallery in Washington, D.C., prior to permanent installation in the U.S. Capitol Speaker's Gallery. The four life-sized portraits of Will Rogers, the Cherokee scholar Sequoyah, U.S. Senator Robert Kerr, and athlete Jim Thorpe are viewed



CHARLES BANKS WILSON puts the finishing touches to *Enter Coronado*, one of the **FOUR MURALS** he painted for the **OKLAHOMA CAPITOL DOME**.

by more than a million visitors per year at the Oklahoma Capitol. He is best known for his pictures of contemporary Indian life. *The Ten Little Indians* portfolio created by Wilson has been reproduced in every country in the world.

Honored by the U.S. State Department as well as the International Institute of Arts and Letters in Geneva, Charles Banks Wilson received the first Governor's Art Award and the D.S.C. (Distinguished Service Citation) from the University of Oklahoma. Wilson was also honored in the Oklahoma Hall of Fame and received the Western Heritage award from the National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum.

Wilson created the designs for "The First American Series," basalt medallions depicting famous Indian chiefs, which were produced by Josiah Wedgewood and Sons, Inc., England. One major undertaking was creating the murals — which depict the state's discovery, frontier trade, Indian immigration, settlement, and overall history — for the Oklahoma Capitol. These murals total 110 feet in length.

Wilson established the Art Department at Northeastern Oklahoma A&M College, which he chaired for 15 years, and the Charles Banks Wilson Scholarship has helped numerous young artists who have wanted to study there.

Wilson was a Fellow of the International Institution of Arts and Letters, was a member of the Oklahoma Hall of Fame and was the recipient of the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Arkansas Arts Council. He has also been awarded the Oklahoma Governor's Art Award and was the subject of a documentary titled 'Portrait of an American Artist.'

In 1995, Charles Banks Wilson painted "Freedom's Warrior," which commemorates the history of Native American involvement in the U.S. armed forces, and Native American contributions to our country in times of war or peace. It was commissioned by David W. Hearn, Jr., and is currently on loan to the Clifton Steamboat Museum in Beaumont, Texas. The painting was loaned to the museum to highlight its collection of Mr. Wilson's work.

May 9, 2007, "Charles Banks Wilson Day," was confirmed by the Oklahoma House of Representatives and the Oklahoma State Senate.

The Northeastern Oklahoma A & M Foundation built the Charles Banks Wilson Art Gallery which was dedicated in August 2013. It honors his contributions to the college.

The 15,000-square-foot space includes a student gallery, classrooms, studio space a computer-graphic design studio, and faculty offices.