

Auto-Biography by Kathy Lynn Boltz Phillips Filipiak

My given name is Kathy Lynn Boltz. I was born in the small town of Johnstown, PA., aka Flood City, near the Conemaugh Pass of the Laurel Highlands in 1948. My mother was a homemaker with amazing skills working with fabric and thread. My dad after returning from WWII married her and was a machinist at US Steel. I have one brother who is two years younger than I who still resides there. I went into grade school at age 4 since there was no kindergarten then. I went right into first grade. I loved school and I never missed a day. I had notoriety there for perfect attendance and sports but I was not a scholar. I loved penmanship and physical education and I was good with my hands because of great hand eye coordination.

In fourth grade, my class was introduced to musical instruments and everyone was sent home with a note informing their parents about the musical instrument program. Anyone that wanted to try one was allowed to as long as your parents agreed to provide private music lessons on the desired instrument. With approval, I chose the clarinet. I was 9 years old at this time. I played the clarinet with excellence all thru my school years and played well enough to be 1st chair in the Johnstown Junior Symphony Orchestra. I was recruited by several colleges for music study but my academic grades were average. I chose Indiana University of Pennsylvania, because they desperately wanted me for their music program. I had to take three summer classes to prove I could get a B average and was accepted in the fall. I passed with flying colors! My high school was so strict and hard that the college stuff seemed easy for me. I was a natural in the IUP music program but there was no room for art, painting or drawing. I always knew I could draw but didn't have much time for it. I painted the picture window at home with a Christmas scene every year and that was about it. I played in five different IUP music

groups including the IUP symphony orchestra where I met my first husband with the name Phillips. He was a tuba major. I graduated from IUP with a Bachelor of Science in Music and got married. I was qualified and taught Jr High general music in Monessen, PA. I also earned 24 more credits and I reached my certification of tenure from Penn State University.

Still no time for the art!? I wanted to start a family so I taught for 5 years and had a son in 1975. I decided to stay home with the baby and I went stir crazy. So I started taking art classes one night a week. I was in a small town called Uniontown, PA and found a little old lady that sponsored oil painting classes in the upstairs store room of a shop. Teachers there came and went until one of them introduced me to watercolor painting. I fell in love and bloomed with the techniques and tricks of watercolor painting.

I have enhanced my knowledge of painting in watercolors in many ways. I taught 18 years as the principal art instructor within the West Bloomfield Community Education system. I lectured as the guest watercolor instructor at Chautauqua Institute of Arts in New York. I engaged in advanced artistic studies with Muriel Fullmer, Rockwell plate artist for Hallmark. I have taken courses with Paul Denis, instructor at the Cleveland Institute of Art; studied under Diane Boldman at Baycrafters Studio of Cleveland; and studied with Fred Leach, Head Designer at American Greetings. I invested time with William Kufell, Master Portrait Artist as well. I also attended several master's workshops with Nita Engles and Tom Lynch, Celebrity Watercolor Artist's. I have been invited and demonstrated my art as watercolor master at the Society of Decorative Painter conventions in Las Vegas, NV; Providence, RI; Poconos, PA; Columbus, OH; Toronto, Canada; and Lansing, MI.

While my husband's work moved the family many times from Uniontown to Washington, PA then Ohio, then Michigan in 1988, I also started

showing and selling my artwork in fine art fairs at venues in the Midwest. I taught watercolor painting classes during the school months and toured selling my paintings in the summer months. I also became involved in gallery and exhibition shows. In 1997, I divorced my first husband and in 2000 married my second husband in Michigan with the name Filipiak. We started and trademarked LeisureTimeArt, LLC also in 2000 and built a beautiful studio at our home in West Bloomfield, MI.

Throughout my selling years I have won cash awards, best of show ribbons, accolades and honors. I have taught watercolor classes to more than 10,000 students and have achieved an extensive body of work. I have developed artistic themes in my works of “Life on the Good Side”, “Rainpeople”, “Streetscenes”, and “Animals”. But, one of my favorite achievements was writing and illustrating my childrens books. My first in 2004, which I wrote, illustrated, and self-published, is sold out; 3000 copies. My second self-published book was in 2010 and it is stacked up in the garage since I am retired from the show circuits and tired of fighting with Amazon.

I am collaborating again with my husband, Richard, on a third book. He is my advisor, roadie, and chef! I’m still teaching a couple of months of the year at my home studio and participating in some exhibits. I sell original artwork, lithographic & giclee reproductions, and books through my website, LeisureTimeArt.com. I am living happily ever after by enjoying grandchildren and traveling through a tourist’s bucket list of destinations around the world. Peace!