

Commemorative Art for 2008 Old Florida Celebration of the Arts Unveiled

It is with great pleasure that we announce that Bill Roberts is the creator of the wonderful commemorative artwork for our 44th annual Cedar Key spring arts festival, Old Florida Celebration of the Arts, April 12th and 13th. Bill is a 26 year resident of Cedar Key and has spent a life time honing his artistic talent that seems to be a natural ability. He had been sketching, or doodling as he calls it, for years when his mother recognized his ability and bought him a watercolor paint kit. At the age of 15, Bill realized that he didn't care for the watercolor medium, but he knew he was destined to be an artist. His beautiful paintings are filled with colorful hues of oils and acrylics.

However, this is only part of the story. Bill has had a full life that includes not only being an artist, but also an all American cowboy and fishing guide.

Bill started as a forth generation cowboy at age 13 in the area of the Everglades and Lake Okeechobee where he grew up. Bill has herded and worked cattle for some 20+ years in 30 out of 67 counties in the state of Florida. Much of his art work depicts his life as a cowboy and riding the trail.

Being a true Floridian, Bill has also spent his life on the water, getting to know the good fishing areas in Florida. This lead into another career opportunity as a "Fishing Guide". Bill started by taking parties to the lakes in the area of Ocala National Forest where freshwater bass and other fish were caught.

In 1975 Bill found Cedar Key and he realized he had found paradise. He visited the area for several years before making Cedar Key his permanent home in 1982. Bill would take out parties looking for redfish, tarpon, and shark. On these trips he noticed the beautiful Gulf Coast area; he would keep these pictures in his mind and later produce paintings that showed the surrounding landscape and the daily life in Cedar Key. These paintings along with his renditions of his life as a cowboy have become beloved by all that see them. Although Bill can most often be found on the water with his fishing parties, his work is displayed in local Cedar Key businesses like The Cook's Café and Barefoot Artist Gallery (both on Historic 2nd Street), as well as in many homes.

We are proud to have him as our commemorative artist and to have him exhibit his extraordinary works again at this year's festival. It is artists like Bill Roberts who have helped to Cedar Key on the map.

There will be a Silent Auction of Bill Roberts original commemorative piece for the festival. For further information, please contact Judy at the Cedar Key Area Chamber of Commerce at (352) 543.5600.

-Kim Corlew 352.543.5400