

CAMPUS NEWS

Longtime Adjunct Art Instructor Gary Freeman Donates Two Murals to Dover Library

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- ▲ The photo on the left shows the mural titled, "Angel of the Morning." The other painting is titled, "The Face of Jesus."

Paintings Feature Churches in Mountain Landscapes with Hidden Christian Images

BOILING SPRINGS, N.C.—Gary Freeman, longtime adjunct art instructor for Gardner-Webb University, recently donated two large murals to Dover Library. A working artist for more than 30 years, Freeman is known for his landscape paintings and architectural and nature studies. Both paintings depict churches in mountain scenery and represent actual places in the North Carolina Appalachian Mountains between Boone and Glendale Springs in Watauga and Ashe counties.

“Gary’s gift was such a thoughtful and welcome surprise,” praised Dean of the Library and University Archivist Dr. Natalie Edwards Bishop. “While the renovations of the third floor of the library transformed how students could use the space, it was still lacking warmth and character. Gary’s paintings added the life, color, and pop the space needed—we hope to enjoy them for many years to come.”

One painting is 8 by 4 feet and features a fall landscape with reds, oranges and yellows. Named “The Face of Jesus,” observers can find the face in the textures of the trees above the church. The second work, 10 by 6 feet, is called “Angel of the Morning” and represents a summer sunrise. Above the church, a sleeping angel can be detected in the rolling hillside.



▲ Gary Freeman poses with the mural, “The Face of Jesus.”

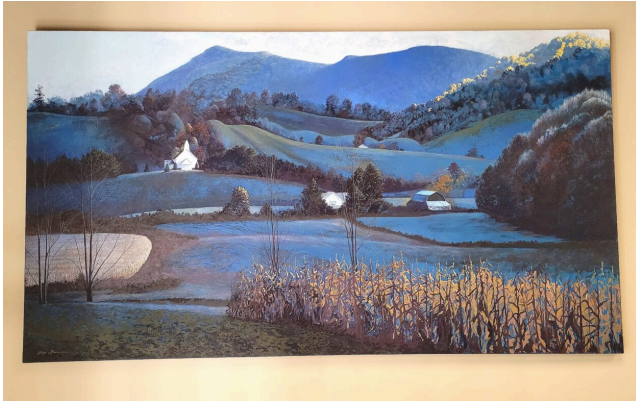
“My larger paintings can take months to finish and are usually preceded by digital reference photos and smaller preparatory drawings, watercolor, and mixed media studies,” Freeman noted. “Since Gardner-Webb is a Christian university in the western part of the state near the mountains, I thought it made sense to display the paintings there. I hope they will bring serenity and peace to the students who seek the quietness of the third-floor library space. I am honored that my works will be on display on campus in the Dover Library and thankful to the Gardner-Webb administration for accepting my donation.”

Freeman added that Gardner-Webb is special to him because his daughter, Camille Hardin, is an alumna of the nurse practitioner program. He is thankful for the education she received that prepared her for a successful career. Freeman is also honored that the University recognized him in 2019 for his many years of exemplary service as an adjunct.

A painter and printmaker, Freeman showed talent as a young child and started lessons at age 9. He continued to work in watercolors and oils before switching to acrylics and mixed media when he was a teenager. He earned an Associate of Fine Arts from Gaston College and transferred to East Carolina University where he received a Bachelor of Science degree in art and a Master of Arts with a concentration in printmaking and additional study in drawing, illustration, and art history.

Freeman finds his subject matter by exploring the Piedmont and Foothills near his home in Cherryville, N.C., where he has a studio on Main Street. He has produced over 100 commissions and printed more than 30 editions of original prints. He has also worked as a gallery director, curator, and art show juror. He also has experience managing one-person, group, competition, and invitational exhibitions.

He retired as art instructor and head of the Gaston College art program in 2014 to return to public school teaching. He served as an art teacher in middle school for one year and elementary school for two years. Then, he moved to Thomas Jefferson Classical Academy in Mooresboro, N.C., where he taught AP studio classes and early college art history for three years.



▲ “Angel of the Morning”

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