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Artist's statement

For me, drawing animals is an innate gift. My family always had horses, dogs, cats and all the creatures that we five children could easily collect. At three, my favorite toy was an easel and chalk. Recognizing my passion, my parents allowed me to start art lessons at the age of five. By age nine, I was attending all day class every Saturday at the Art Institute of Chicago with live models and the entire museum in which to work. It was a young artist's heaven.

We then moved to Cincinnati where horses and high school took precedence until I entered Miami University in Oxford, Ohio. Even after I received a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in graphic design, Miami continued to be a focus in my artistic life. I have juried shows for the Miami Museum, critiqued student portfolios for admission and recruited talented young artists for the School of Fine Art.

Throughout my life, painting and drawing have been a source of solace, joy, accomplishment and income. Like many always poor college students, I sold my work in order to buy supplies for the next assignment. As a young stay-at-home mother, my crafty talents helped me to be a star in my children's eyes. At the same time, I was the artistic guru for innumerable civic fundraisers, charitable galas and corporate events. After my children were grown, it was time to get back to my real artistic passion and time to make my mark in the art world. It was natural for me to gravitate to what I knew best and had observed all my life... Horses and dogs. My mentor, Margaret Lewis, who died in 2009, was a brilliant portrait artist and worked with me for twenty years. She was "old school" critical of my work and her excellent command of the English language allowed for little misconception.

As for my portraits, no one is more surprised than me to see them evolve on the watercolor paper. They just come up from the colors and shapes that I see. I know the paintings evoke great emotion from the owners when they see the finished piece. That shared joy, that feeling at that moment, is the real reward of my portrait work.