

## Artist's Statement

I am particularly honored at having been invited to exhibit my artwork at the Captain Avery Museum as my family roots are firmly planted in Shady Side. My grandfather William Massey Owings was born in Shady Side in 1870. Like my great grandfather Basil A. Owings, he was proprietor of a country store on Snug Harbor Road. He was also the West Shady Side Postmaster. Around 1922 he and my grandmother Leicy (Simmons) Owings and their family moved to Annapolis where he joined his brother-in-law Sam Atwell building houses.

An interesting coincidence is having my exhibit at the Captain Avery Museum coincide with the Shady Side Oyster Festival. My great grandfather Basil A. Owings' occupation was listed in the 1880 census as: "Oyster Trade". The occupation of his son Basil A. Owings, Jr. was listed as: "Oyster Tonger". Both men were lifelong Shady Side residents.

I grew up in a house adjacent to the house that grandfather built in 1922. Unfortunately, I never knew him: he passed away before I was born. But I grew up around my grandmother and four of my mom's older sisters, all of whom lived on our street or just a block away. Our neighborhood was something of an "Owings Family Enclave". Growing up I heard many stories about their lives in Shady Side in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. I remember hearing about how grandmother would take the steamboat Emma Giles up the Bay to the city to go shopping and even traveling by horse and sleigh out on the frozen river! I got a healthy dose of Shady Side lore from my mom and my aunts.

Having been around the water all my life growing up in Annapolis, it is not surprising that much of my artwork has a nautical theme: workboats, lighthouses, and watermen. However, I have covered a wide range of subjects including landscapes, portraits, automobiles, airplanes, and music subjects. Recently I have created a series of large non-objective geometric "trompe l'oeil" shaped canvases. I approach my work through a variety of media: watercolor, acrylic, graphite, lithography, and etching. I often use a mixed media approach, combining two or more approaches in a single piece.

I graduated from the four-year program at the Corcoran School of Art in 1969, with a major in graphics and minor in painting and received my BFA in multi-media from the Maryland Institute College of Art. I earned my MFA in studio art from George Washington University.

My thesis advisor at G.W. was Washington DC realist Frank Wright. My association with Professor Wright had a major influence on my later near photo-realist work. After earning my MFA, I produced more than three dozen editions of Mylar lithographs, mostly with a Chesapeake Bay theme. Most of these prints were done in collaboration with Mel Hunter at Atelier North Star in Burlington, Vermont.

My lithographs were included in the "Art in the Embassies Program" of the U.S. State Dept. and were displayed at U.S. Embassies throughout the globe. A mixed-media painting of mine entitled *Off Season* received the Award of Excellence at the Thirteenth Annual Mystic International Exhibition, Mystic, Connecticut. My artwork can be found in private and corporate collections including: the permanent collection of the U.S. Naval Academy, the Beverly Robinson Collection of Naval & Marine Art, the Calvert Marine Museum, and Westinghouse. Additionally, I created series of mixed media abstractions based on mathematical proofs which are on permanent display at St. John's College, Annapolis, Maryland.