

Historic marker honors artist Warren Hunter in Bandera



Painter, etcher, book illustrator and inspiring teacher [Warren Hunter](#) is being honored with a Texas Historical Commission Historical Marker, which will be dedicated at 2 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 8, at the [Frontier Times Museum](#) in Bandera.

More than 40 of his paintings will be featured in a one-day-only exhibit at the Langford Historic Home, 14th Street and Hackberry in Bandera. Also, the Frontier Times Museum will have Hunter paintings from its permanent collection on view in the Doane Gallery.

His paintings hang in the Alamo and at the San Jacinto Monument, and his works are included in collections at the Smithsonian Institution and the White House. He also did artwork for Southwest Research Institute for more than 25 years. A traditional realist, his watercolors, oils and etchings depict many scenes of Texas.

He taught at the Hunter School of Art in San Antonio, which first opened in La Villita in the 1940s and later moved to 810 Brooklyn St., and was the first dean of the [San Antonio Art Institute](#), which was on the grounds of the McNay Art Museum.

His students included many local artists: Raul Gutierrez, Donald Yena, Finis Collins, Joe Lopez, Jacqui von Honts, Vie Dunn-Harr, Nellie Gill and Susie Short.

“It is as an exceptional teacher that Warren Hunter is most warmly remembered,” note [Lauren A. Langord](#) and Susie Short in their proposal for the historical marker. “He had a reputation for teaching basic skills and sensitive guidance to help students apply those skills to their artistic goals. He wanted his paintings to speak a language that all could understand. He wanted to humanize his art. He considered his work to be comprehensive realism that went beyond photographic naturalism.”

He was born John Warren Hunter on Nov. 11, 1904, in London, Kimble County, Texas. His father, [John Marvin Hunter](#), was an itinerant printer who worked for newspapers throughout West Texas, New Mexico and Arizona before settling in Bandera, where he published the Bandera New Era from 1921 to 1935 and the Bandera Bulletin from 1945 until his death in 1957. He established the Frontier Times magazine in 1923 and founded the Frontier Times Museum in 1927.

Warren Hunter graduated from Bandera High School in 1923. With the help of his father, he printed the Harper Herald in Harper, Texas, for 10 years and then moved to Chicago to attend the Chicago Art Institute. While attending the institute, he was commissioned to paint a portrait of Jeff Hamilton, Sam Houston’s servant, which hangs in the San Jacinto Monument Museum, and he painted a mural for a post office in Alice, Texas.

He returned to San Antonio in 1939 and worked as a commercial artist at an advertising firm until World War II, when he served as a civilian cartographer for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers at Fort Sam Houston. Later during the war, he went to Washington to the World Map Indices Section and served in the U.S. Office of Strategic Services (OSS), a forerunner of the CIA.

After the war, he worked as a freelance illustrator in New York before returning to San Antonio in 1946 and opening his art school in La Villita. He worked as a book illustrator and designer in addition to painting scenes of Texas. In 1972, the American Artist Professional League awarded him a Distinguished Service Award.

He never retired, and continued to teach until his death on May 5, 1993, when he was caught by rising floor waters and drowned in the flood zone in Olmos Park.

“Warren Hunter was an extraordinary Texan dedicated to teaching and making art,” Langford said. “His ability to capture the beauty of our state has left us with a great legacy of artistic creation.”

- **Dan R. Goddard**
- **SATX Express News/MYSA**
- <https://blog.mysanantonio.com/weekender/2008/11/historic-marker-honors-artist-warren-hunter-in-bandera/>
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