

Biography

Steven Lotus is an award-winning artist. His landscape watercolor paintings, particularly of golf courses, have earned him national and world wide recognition.

Using his actual name Steven Lotysz (pronounced Lotus) and commissions for 50 major golf championships under his golf artist pen name Steve Lotus, he balanced his dual love of science and art as both a dentist and artist for 30 years.

By day, as Steven Lotysz DDS, he practiced dentistry in his hometown of Frankfort, IL., a small community just southwest of Chicago. By night he painted the landscapes around him. An avid golfer, Steve seemingly never played a round of golf without his camera. Photographing the beauty he saw around him on golf courses would eventually lead to his painting for major golf events.

For ease of pronunciation, Steve decided early on to use the phonetically correct "Steve Lotus" as his artistic pen name for his golf art and that is the way he currently signs his golf paintings and prints.

Painting Style and Subjects

Using color and texture in a style best described as impressionistic realism, Steve Lotysz paintings have won awards at many of our countries premier painting exhibitions. He is comfortable with both realistic and impressionistic styles in his landscape paintings, which are executed in watercolor, mixed media and oil paint. His subject matter has ranged from the California landscapes to paintings of historical sites of Frankfort and most recently famous golf course scenes.

Personal History

Steve was born in Forsythe, GA., in 1953 to Ukrainian immigrant parents who worked on a farm in Georgia in 1952. They subsequently moved to the Chicagoland area in 1954 to find work, where Steve has lived ever since.

Steve's hobbies and interests include:

Music - Steve plays both the piano and guitar. He usually paints while listening to a mixture of classic rock, new age and classical music. In his youth, Steve became a huge Beatles fan even going to the extent of forming a garage band that while not reaching their goal of becoming the next Beatles did play at many of Chicago's high school weekend dances.

Golf - Steve is still about a 7 handicap in golf and it continues to be his favorite sport.

Other Sports - Steve played baseball, basketball, football, volleyball and hockey at the intramural level in high school and college.

Gardening - Steve enjoys outdoor and indoor gardening and often takes walks in his garden during the day while taking a break from painting.

For as long as he can remember, Steve has always had a desire to draw and paint. Whenever possible he would go to the Chicago Public Library to take out the latest of the “How to Draw” series of books and for hours he would practice drawing.

Steve attended the Moos Elementary School in Chicago for grades kindergarten thru 2nd and later Leslie Lewis Elementary School on the west side of Chicago from grades 3rd through 8th. He then went on to study architecture for four years at Lane Technical High School also in Chicago.

Favoring the drawing and rendering part of architecture, Steve first pursued a career in commercial art at Northern Illinois University in 1972, the first in his family to attend a four-year university. He soon found biology and chemistry to be as interesting as art. He became an undergraduate zoology teacher’s assistant for Dr. Charles Rhode, the department chair. It was then that his interest in the sciences led to a change in career direction. Later, as president of the Pre-Professional Society at NIU, Steve explored career options that would combine his interest in science and art. Dentistry seemed to be the perfect fit.

In 1973, he met the former Susan Green of the Beverly area of Chicago at Northern Illinois University. They married in 1976. Sue comes from a golfing family background as both of her parents were once active as members of Ridge Country Club in Chicago.

Steve and Sue have two children - Christopher, an electrical engineer, and Alecia Ann, a certified public accountant. Both played on their respective Lincoln-Way High School golf teams.

In their younger years, Chris and Alecia could often be found working along with Steve and Sue at golf tournaments around the country helping sell the prints and paintings. At the 2002 PGA Championship in Minneapolis, MN., a local news reporter gave the family the moniker “Team Lotus”.

After graduating with honors from both Northern Illinois University and the University of Illinois Dental School in 1980, Steve went on to practice as an associate dentist at the office of his senior year clinical instructor, the late Dr. Alan Shapiro of Elk Grove Village, a very good sculptor in his own right. Steve later moved to the Frankfort, IL., area in 1983, having acquired the dental practice of the late Dr. Joseph Petnuch.

In 1987, at age 34, Steve became seriously ill for the first time contracting thyroid cancer. Surgery restored his health but his outlook on life changed forever. The illness forced him to reevaluate what is important in life. Steve’s illnesses led to a reaffirmation of his lifelong Christian faith and a renewed awareness of how precious health and family are. It also led to his return to the painting he had abandoned for seven years while establishing his dental practice. A Christian symbol of his faith sits beside his signature in every painting since.

It was about that same time that he met his art mentor, the late Sam Hageman, a noted Frankfort watercolor artist, on a golf course at the Frankfort Park District golf league. A friendship grew from their mutual love for art and golf. Soon after, Steve, a 4-handicap golfer, began giving Sam golfing lessons in exchange for watercolor lessons at Sam’s home and studio. He studied with Hageman until Sam’s death the next year in 1988. Sam’s wife Judy remains a close friend and they continued to carry Sam Hageman

lithographs and original paintings of rural landscapes in their gallery, White Street Gallery, until it closed in 2012.

With the hiring of associate dentists over the years, Steve was able to devote more time to his painting. Having sold his dental practice in 2009 to his associate, Dr. Matthew Burton, Steve retired from dentistry in 2012 to paint full time.

Dentistry and Art

As a dentist, Dr. Steve Lotysz was devoted to maintaining high standards in his practice. However, after the dental journals had been read, and the family was asleep, the studio lights and music would come on and the painting began in his art studio, which is attached to the family home.

Steve first began displaying his paintings in his dental office in 1988. His staff was often asked if the 'Lotysz' behind the paintings was his wife or one of his children. New patients were often surprised to learn that he was both a dentist and an artist.

At art shows artists were similarly surprised to learn that he was a dentist although he does not usually advertise the fact. To Steve it was not surprising as the hand-eye coordination required to do painting was very helpful in the practice of dentistry. Steve has often said that the dental drill became much like a paintbrush in his hands.

The artwork in his office also seemed to help diffuse the tension and anxiety so often associated with dental procedures. It allowed for something else to talk about after the patient's dental needs were first discussed. Patients also seemed to find comfort in knowing that their dentist had some artistic talent and they seemed to share in the excitement of his winning artistic awards, often clipping out articles about his awards and golf tournament commissions from local newspapers.

Painting History

Prior to concentrating on golf course paintings, Steve's landscape paintings of scenes around his hometown and the hillsides of Galena, IL., area were hung around town. His paintings have won awards in many of the nation's finest art exhibitions including the American Watercolor Society in New York and the Transparent (once Midwest) Watercolor Society of which he is a signature member, under his correct name, Steve Lotysz. His work has also earned him awards in numerous national art publication competitions and a piece of his work has been acquired by the Neville Museum in Green Bay.

In 2012 Steve was featured at a one-man showing of his work at the prestigious Union League Club in Chicago in coordination with his being a featured artist in tandem with sports artist, the late Leroy Neiman, for the 2012 Ryder Cup at Medinah Country Club.

Since then Steve has climbed the ladder of artistic recognition and success, from first exhibiting his work at local art fairs and regional shows to now painting for major golf events and tournaments around the world.

White Street Galley/Lotus Golf Art

Although Steve had requests to display his artwork from galleries around the country, none of them were very close to his hometown of Frankfort. In November of 1992, he and Susan, a corporate

accountant, decided to open their own gallery, White Street Gallery and Framing, down the block from Steve's dental office.

Along with paintings and lithographs by Steve Lotus and "Steve Lotysz," the gallery also displayed and sold original paintings and limited editions prints of both nationally known and local artists, many of whom are still friends Steve has made at art exhibitions across the country.

Besides operating the gallery until its closure in 2012, Sue does all of Steve's framing. She also manages Lotus Golf Art, taking care of the extensive list of details involved with the publishing, packaging and shipping of posters and prints produced from Steve's original paintings for each major championship.

The "Lotus Golf Art" website at www.stevelotus.com continues to offer Steve Lotus golf prints, posters and original paintings. There are plans to have a link to pages offering Steve Lotysz paintings and prints in the near future.

Lotus Golf Painting History

Steve's interest in golf art came about primarily as a result of the melding of his passions for art, golf and architecture. An avid golfer and photographer for many years, he would take photos as he made his way around the golf course, capturing scenes on film at both dawn and dusk. As a former student of architecture at Lane Technical High School, Steve took notice of how many clubs are known for their interesting clubhouse architecture as well as their fine golf courses.

As both a golfer and an artist, Steve believes he brings a unique perspective to golf art that sets him apart from other artists. Evidently, the professional golfing community agreed, and in 1997 he was commissioned for his first major golf tournament as featured artist for the U.S. Senior Open at Olympia Fields Country Club. That was followed up quickly with a commission to paint for the 1999 PGA Championship at another Chicago gem, Medinah Country Club, which was won by Tiger Woods.

Steve's first commission did not come easy. After seeing another artist's work for another major tournament, he felt like he might be able to do even better. In 1995, he applied for the position of signature artist for the 1997 U.S. Senior Open at Olympia Fields Country Club. The first person from the USGA who was in charge told him they would consider his application but did not follow through on his promise. Over a period of a year, three other people either from the club or the USGA who claimed to be "in charge" either said no or said they would get back to him. This included a club member who visited Steve's gallery which had been painstakingly arranged for the "interview" saying he would call back in a few weeks which he did not. Finally, frustrated and taking matters into his own hands, Steve contacted a friend at the club who was involved with club affairs to ask his advice. Within the hour the Olympia Field CC president called to ask about the paintings Steve had done for his presentation. The next day he arrived at Steve's house where Steve had arranged his paintings on the floor where he said, "These are beautiful. Where have you been? Of course, we would love to have you as our official artist for the event." The event was very successful and the club went on to buy many of Steve's paintings for their collection. The lesson to be learned here which Steve passed on to his children was do not take "no" for an answer until you hear "no" from the person who is really in charge.

Today, Steve Lotus has become recognized as one of golf's premier artists. Commissioned by the PGA of America, The Royal & Ancient Golf Club; the United States Golf Association, the Augusta National Golf Club, the PGA Tour and the LPGA Tour, he has produced a series of paintings, prints and posters that depict some of the world's finest courses hosting golf's leading major championships. His original paintings hang in the collections of some of the world's most prominent golf clubs including Royal Liverpool Golf Club, Southern Hills Country Club and Oak Hill Country Club.

Steve is the only artist to have ever been selected as a featured official print artist for three of golf's four major tournaments each year for four years in a row (2016-19) as well as the 2016 Ryder Cup. He is slated to paint for the 2024 PGA Championship at Valhalla Golf Club and the 2024 Open Championship at Royal Troon Golf Club which will mark his 50th major championship commission.

Artist's Final Comment

Steve attributes much of his success to his faith, his wife Susan and his children. They have always been his biggest fans, critics and they live day to day with the emotional roller coaster that is the life of an artist. Steve will usually show his wife many of his paintings in early stages to see if she sees "what he sees." Often times, she will encourage him to finish a piece that he would otherwise have given up on.

Steve considers his artistic talent to be a spiritual gift. His life-changing experience with serious illness rekindled his spiritual beliefs and his return to painting. He takes time to pray before painting sessions asking for guidance and inspiration. He takes nothing for granted and fully appreciates that life is finite. As a gesture of his faith, Steve includes a Christian symbol after his name on his paintings.

Steve urges his family, friends and others to pursue their dreams. Too often, people go through life forgetting the big picture. While he would never wish serious illness on anyone, he does wish the opportunity for a reevaluation of life on everyone - something to allow them to stop and take inventory of where they are in life and change direction if necessary. To pursue the things they love and deem important and at the same time try to do something to improve the world in which they live.

His story should serve to remind creative people to not give up on their dream and that sometimes the path to achieving one's dream career in life is not always a straight one.