

William Hartman

Florida & Michigan Landscapes Oils - Watercolors Artist
1906 - 1989

“After all those years, he still found it terribly exciting to paint out of doors. It’s not just doing the painting. It becomes a total experience. There’s nothing like it, standing in an autumn field with the sun setting everything aflame with its golden light. You are capturing a moment in time, and a day you will never forget.” - *William Hartman*



William Hartman was born in Muskegon, Michigan on March 8, 1906. His father came to Muskegon from the Netherlands about 1880 where he met and married Kate Karel, whose parents had also come from the Netherlands. William, Thomas’s youngest son, began painting in oils at the age of eight. He attended art classes at the Hackley Art Gallery in Muskegon, and was a protégé of its Director Frank Almy. Hartman was the first artist in Muskegon to be hired by the WPA, and was soon commissioned to paint and construct dioramas of the city’s history for their 1937 Centennial Celebration. He served as a Medic in the European Theater during World War II, and married in 1942. His wife, the former Lorna Albertsen died shortly after child birth, leaving a daughter, Carol Marie.

With the War over, Hartman attended the Ringling School of Art in Sarasota, Florida, on the GI Bill. There, he met and married a fellow student, Martha Dye, of Orlando, Florida. His household grew as his daughter Carol was joined by a baby brother, William Benton, in 1947. 1948 was an eventful year, when he was invited to exhibit his watercolors in a one-man show at the Robert C. Vose Gallery in Boston. It was the first of over 50 exhibitions to come, all devoted to his work. The William and Martha Hartman Gallery opened in 1952. The first of its kind in Sarasota, with classes in Painting and Printmaking. These classes were to continue for 35 years, although the early gallery was closed in 1960.

The Hartman’s built a large studio for his classes in Sarasota, and later another in Michigan on property adjacent to the Silver Lake State Park. He spent summers there, with his family, painting his beloved sand dunes and the peaceful vistas of Oceana County. In 1969, he joined the faculty of the Ringling School of Art in Sarasota, teaching Life Drawing, Landscape and Portrait. Stricken with cancer in the early 80’s, he retired from his teaching duties to paint, which he did practically to the end. Hartman preferred working out-of-doors, out early, to catch the morning sun. With the light changing rapidly, he worked quickly, usually within a two hour period. His bold brush strokes and vibrant colors capturing the freshness and spontaneity of watercolor.

Hartman’s yesterdays can be appreciated today. Inquiries about his work may be directed to the William Hartman Gallery in Sarasota, Florida at (941) 955-4785.