

DOROTHY MUELLER GEYER

By Lenore Harris Hughes
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Dorothy Mueller Geyer - known nationally for her prolific floral paintings, featured in "Texas Women Painters from 1900-1960," first art teacher at Burges High School, and a founder of the El Paso Art Association - died Oct. 28 at White Acres, where she had lived for the past 13 years. She was 88 plus 2 weeks.

When Bill Mitchell made a video of Dorothy on her 80th birthday, the opening showed a lovely lady painting a watercolor picture of flowers, bright and beautiful, looking as if they were enjoying a spring breeze.

"Don't just sit down and paint in one place on your canvas," she said as she pressed her brush here and there, "but paint all over your canvas."

She never put her things away but always had an easel nearby. She thought not in design, but in color.

"When I get up in the middle of the night, I might pick up a brush and add some paint," she laughed. She laughed a lot on the video, tenderly touching a picture here and there as she told how she painted each.

She spent much of her life teaching. She encouraged students to "open your eyes and see. Look at a cloud. What pattern do you see in it? In trees with their bare branches? You feel like you are sharing what you have when you teach."

In 1997, one of her three sons, Audian Paxson, and her grandson, Kim, collaborated with her to publish a booklet, "Painting Pure

Joy," which is a collection of 21 of her paintings.

Audian says, "I recall, as a boy, entering her kitchen to find her cooking a soup or stew and baking a cake, plus doing the ironing and touching up a large oil painting while



waiting for an area of a watercolor to dry,"

Dorothy was born in Baltimore, Md., Oct. 7, 1909, one of three children born to Sam Mueller and Harriet Brockman Muellen. She began painting as a child and was president of her high school art group. Her life was filled with art. She took workshops under a number of International teachers in New York City, taught for more than 50 years and lectured throughout the United States.

"My Mom hung more pictures than anyone in Texas" said her son, 210th District judge Sam Paxson, as he pointed out his favorites in his chambers on the 10th floor of the County Court House. "Her grandson Kirk made mention of her painting in his eulogy, saying 'Grandmother would paint on anything,' and that is so. She painted a table-

cloth, her cane and Christmas cards. Each card had its own design.”

She won second place for a picture hanging in the Guggenheim Art Gallery in New York City that brought a prize of \$5,000.

The father of her three sons died when Sam was in the fourth grade, and she moved with them to El Paso in 1942. She became involved in the Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church, where she met Henry W. Geyer. They were married in 1949.

“Mother always said he must have been very brave to marry a woman with three children,” Sam said.

The Dorothy Geyer Art Education Fund was set up through the Community Foundation as an 80th birthday present from her sons Sam, Audian, and David. First the fund is to be used for providing scholarships to help financially burdened students. A second function is to enable the El Paso Museum of Art to pay its art teachers higher wages.

The sons planned a party at the El Paso Museum of Art the day of her birthday. Many people she had known through her 50 years of contacts in the community were present.

“She was surprised all right,” son David said.

Sam Paxson said, “Mother was a person who loved color always saw the best in everything. Even if it was ugly, she didn't notice; instead, she noticed the beauty in it.”

She always signed her abstracts "Dot."

Her husband of 40 years, Henry, preceded her in death. She is survived by her sons, Au- than Paxson of Boerne, Texas, 210th District judge Sam Paxson and attorney David Paxson; 14 grand- children; and 14

great-grand- children. Memorials may be given to the Dorothy Geyer Art Center Education Fund of El Paso Community Foundation. Phone 533-4020 for information.

“I feel I've shared” were among Dorothy's last words about life.

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