

## BIOGRAPHY

**BOB BARFKNECHT**

*rjbsouth@yahoo.com*



*Bob Barfknecht has been painting watercolors for nearly fifty years since taking them up under tutelage of Italian artist friends while living in Tuscany. These days he summers on Lake Altoona and winters on Hypoluxo Island in Florida, painting en plein air (outdoors) whenever he can.*

*His work has enjoyed recognition and awards including first prize of the first annual Eau Claire Plein Air Contest at Beaver Creek in 2015. His work is displayed in private and public galleries in Italy and around the U.S. including the Manalapan Public Library and the Madeline Island School of the Arts.*

*Bob participates in many exhibitions and has enjoyed several recent shows in Florida. His work will be shown at a solo show at the L.E. Phillips Public Library in Eau Claire in the autumn of 2020.*

## *From the Artist*

My father was a fine watercolor painter. I was taken along on his week-end paint-outs as a boy. He painted plein air 80 years ago with friends in all seasons. I remember him pouring whiskey into his painting water as it began to freeze up while painting in a snowstorm. He encouraged me to become an engineer and did not mind that I was not interested to learn to paint.

Years later in Italy in front of spectacular architecture and landscape, I took up a brush. I bought paper and paints from an art supply store in Florence and began to paint watercolors. I had no formal training nor any contact with an art school. I chose watercolor paints because my father loved them and because I am allergic to strong solvents like turpentine. I did not know, but soon discovered that watercolor is unforgiving. You cannot paint over your mistakes. That is a worthwhile challenge!

I learned how to draw in mechanical drafting and design classes on my way to earning degrees in engineering. Drawing a palazzo was no more difficult than drawing a machine. So I went out in Florence and the Tuscan countryside and drew churches and palaces and castles because they were beautiful and interested me very much. Then I began to paint them. Along the way I met artists who helped me with technique. I drew and painted when I had time but I was very busy building a career. It was only when I retired that I could enroll in art school for watercolor classes and begin a continuing series of workshops around the country and Europe with fine watercolor artists.

This has been and continues to be a source of great pleasure. I very much enjoy painting outside with friends as my father did many years ago. The plein air movement in this country is becoming very popular as people discover how memorable each day of painting outside can be. You look at a painting that you have made years ago and remember the details of the day and the friends that you shared it with.

For me watercolor painting has been a source of great pleasure and a continuing challenge. It is keeping me young, I think.