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#101 Beeler, Joe Neil (1931-2006) Collection, 1958 – 2006
.4 linear feet

INTRODUCTION

Joe Neil Beeler was an illustrator, painter and sculptor for most of his life. He helped bring international attention to Western art when he rose to fame during the 1960's. He co-founded the Cowboy Artist of America and held several art shows. The papers in this collection include correspondences (personal and professional), news clippings, magazines, articles, photographs, and programs.

DONOR INFORMATION

The materials in this collection were collected by the Special Collections staff between 1998 and 2010. Some of the materials were transferred from the PSU's Office of Development by Ellen Carter.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Joe Neil Beeler was born on December 25, 1931 in Joplin, Missouri. Beeler's spent his childhood learning how to fish, hunt, ride a horse, and shoot a gun. Beeler claimed to be part Cherokee and spent a good deal of time in Quapaw, Oklahoma, at the seasonal powwows with his Native American relatives. During this time he began to identify with the Native American lifestyle and genuinely learned to respect that particular lifestyle.

Beeler discovered his talent for drawing at a very early age. He drew sketches of cowboys, Indians, and horses whenever and wherever he could, including in his school books. He graduated from Joplin [Missouri] High School in 1949 and was drafted into the United States Army serving in the Korean War as a combat artist for the *Stars and Stripes*. After the Korean War ended he pursued his artistic ability and graduated from Kansas State Teacher's College (now Pittsburg State University) with a bachelor's degree in fine arts. He attended the Art Center School in Los Angeles for one year before returning to the Midwest.

He struggled for years to be recognized in the art world, painting everything from large canvases to barns and livestock. Beeler eventually showed University of Oklahoma Press officials samples of his art work. They assigned him to illustrate a series of Western history books. Once the Gilcrease Museum, Tulsa, Oklahoma, asked him to show his art work in a one-man show his career took off. He also held a gallery show at the Montana Historical Society before moving his family to Sedona, Arizona. There he discovered another talent-this time sculpting. His first sculpture series sold out and he was never without work again.

In 1965 Beeler helped co-found the Cowboy Artist of America along with three other cowboy artists. The CAA is now one of the most prominent Western Art society's in the world.

Beeler died on April 26, 2006, from a heart attack while he was helping neighbors brand calves.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The materials in this collection are incomplete, but they give a good overview of Beeler's life and work. The materials housed in Special Collections are divided into ten series: **Biographical, Beeler's Works, Writings Pertaining to Beeler's Style, Cowboy Artists of America, Night**

Song, Correspondence, Obituaries, Pittsburg State University, Photographs, and Advertisement.

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Beeler, Joe (1931-2006) Collection, 1958 – 2006

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With the exception of the **Advertisement Series**, materials within the other series have been arranged in chronological order.

The **Biographical** series contains clippings and articles including a magazine entitled The Sedona Magazine (2002). One of the articles, “Joe Beeler: Paintings and Sculptures of the American West” (1990) contains several images of his works. These materials discuss Beeler’s life, career, and the impact he made on Western art and the art world.

The **Beeler’s Works** series consists of several examples of his paintings and sculptures as well as a few sketches. A majority of the artwork published in books relate to art shows he held.

The **Writings Pertaining to Beeler’s Style** series includes magazines and articles. One particular magazine, Southwest Art (1999), discusses his venture and success in bronze sculpture and how he created a few of his statues. Another magazine, Cowboys & Indians (2004), examines how Beeler’s art reflected his formative years and background and how he wanted to keep his works authentic to western living.

The **Cowboy Artists of America** series includes the magazine, Horizon (1982), which gives the history of how the CAA was created and what it has accomplished in Western art. The article gives a short history of the organization and its 20th anniversary.

The **Night Song** series includes clippings, correspondences, programs and photographs for the unveiling of “Night Song”, a life-sized sculpture of a Native American playing a courting flute. The clippings discuss Beeler’s life at Pittsburg State University, accomplishments, the unveiling of his sculpture, and the exhibition of his artwork. The correspondences are about putting together the exhibition of Beeler’s work.

The **Correspondence** series is comprised of correspondence Beeler received and wrote. The clipping gives a brief overview of his life.

The **Obituaries** series has a clipping and program of Beeler’s death.

The **Pittsburg State University** series includes a clipping regarding Beeler receiving the Meritorious Achievement Award.

The **Photographs** series consists of photographs in chronological order of Joe Neil Beeler with undated photographs at the back of the series.

The **Advertisement** series contains magazines and a clipping of advertisements for art shows Beeler participated in. This series is arranged thematically.

FOLDER LIST

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- f. 2 Article (2001); Sedona Magazine (2002); Clippings (2006); Articles (Undated)

Beeler’s Works

- f. 3 “Joe Beeler shows at the Spiva Art Center” (1973); “Twenty Years of Joe Beeler” (1984)
- f. 4 Article (2001); “The Western Art of Joe Beeler: A Retrospective” (2002); Sculpture, sketches and painting (Undated)

Writings About Beeler's Style

f. 5 Southwest Art (1999); Articles (2001); Cowboys & Indians (2004)

Cowboy Artists of America

f. 6 Horizon (1982); Article (1985)

Night Song

f. 7 Correspondence (2002); Clippings (2002); Programs (2002); Photos (2002)

Correspondence

f. 8 1969 – 2002; Undated correspondence

Obituaries

f. 9 Program and Clipping (2006)

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f. 10 Program (1969)

Photographs

f. 11 Program (1958); 2002; Undated photographs

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f. 12 Four Winds (1980)

f. 13 Southwest Art (1983); Better Homes & Gardens (1982)

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