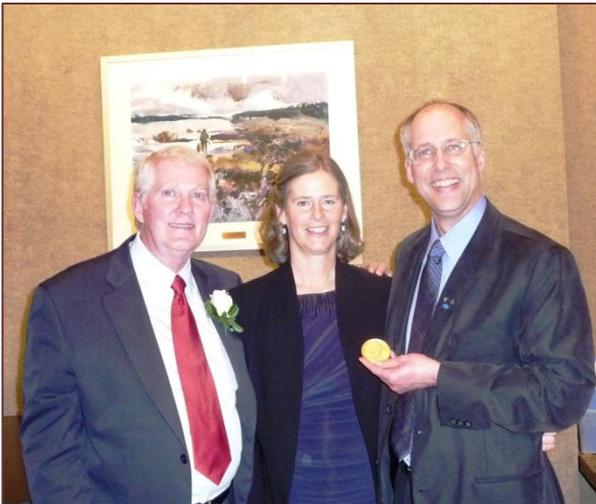


Press Release: Eric Wiegardt, AWS-DF NWS—April 21, 2012

Eric Wiegardt AWS-DF, NWS recipient of American Watercolor Society's Gold Medal of Honor



James McFarlane, President, AWS; Ann & Eric Wiegardt

Eric Wiegardt, AWS-DF, NWS received the highest national honor for a watercolor, the prestigious **American Watercolor Society's Gold Medal of Honor** April 20th 2012 in New York City. In American Watercolor Society's (AWS) 130 year history, only 64 Artists have received this award since its inception in 1948. Eric is the 65th recipient. Eric has also achieved *Dolphin Fellow* (DF). The *Dolphin Fellow* status can only be obtained by merit alone in accordance with a point system based on awards at one or more of AWS's national annual exhibitions. Only a few members of the AWS have achieved this recognition.

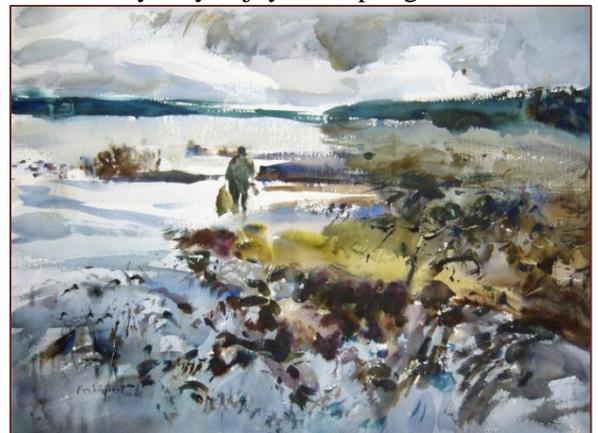


Eric reflected, "To receive this Gold Medal of Honor is for me like receiving an Oscar. Truly, this is a once in a lifetime achievement. I am honored and thankful for such an acknowledgement from my peers for my lifelong passion and work. Without my wife Ann's support and encouragement, my children's enthusiasm, my parent's generosity, the dedication of my business associate Christl Mack of 21 years, Gail Baer's (CommunicaDe Consulting) contributions, the artistic influence of my mentor, Irving Shapiro and the guidance from the Lord, I would have not been confident to pursue this as a career.

The American Watercolor Society annual International Exhibition represents artists from 17 countries, of which only 130 paintings are selected for the exhibition. So that others around the country may enjoy a sampling of the exhibit, the AWS sponsors a traveling exhibit of the biggest and most talented artists in water soluble media. "The Duck Hunter" is one of 40 selected from the exhibit. The show will travel to venues in Tennessee, Texas, Nebraska, California, and Illinois.

The **American Watercolor Society**, the oldest watercolor society in the United States, is a nonprofit membership organization devoted to the advancement of watercolor painting in the United States.^[1] It was founded December 5, 1866; just a year and a half after the four year struggle between the states^[2], started by eleven painters and, originally, was known as the American Society of Painters in Water Colors.^[3]

Across the country, a cultural revolution was taking hold. Following the war, people were searching for beauty to enhance their lives. They were looking for art to help bring them joy. Watercolor painting was coming into its own and competing



The Duck Hunter
AWS Gold Medal of Honor

heavily with other media. Girls' finishing schools were teaching watercolor painting in addition to manners and fashion.^[4]

Requirements for membership were rigid, although the number of painters in watercolor was relatively small. The Society wished to keep the quality of its membership high, but many top painters hesitated to join, because women had been allowed membership.^[5]

Watercolor technique requires discipline, forethought, and planning of the composition, as the paintings cannot be revised if mistakes occur (as one could with oil technique, for instance). AWS judges the work of a painter before granting admission to the society as an "active" (now "signature") member. Such membership in the society now is considered an indication of the painter having established a consistent style and to have demonstrated considerable skill in the medium. Signature Members number about 500. *Transparency* in the works of watercolor painters is highly valued. That is a technique wherein the paper surface is allowed to show through the applied paint as an integral aspect of the painting. The applicant usually must demonstrate a history of winning prizes in juried art shows with professional standing to gain admission. This type of membership in the society, generally, is signaled by "AWS" following the painter's name in promotional materials and biographies. Membership by others is indicated as an "associate" status.^[6]

Eric Wiegardt, a native of Washington State, grew up near the small town of Oysterville, as did his father before him. His great grandfather was one of the original oystermen so his roots run deep on the Long Beach Peninsula.

Following a degree in Civil Engineering from the University of Washington, he graduated from the famed American Academy of Art in Chicago where he studied under his mentor, Irving Shapiro. He returned to his hometown in 1985 to open Wiegardt Studio Gallery in the Victorian home built by his great grandfather.

You can find Eric Wiegardt's watercolor paintings on www.ericwiegardt.com.

[1] Wikipedia [2] American Watercolor Society [3] Wikipedia [4] American Watercolor Society [5] Wikipedia [6] Wikipedia