

Bob Rodeheaver

An Artist at Heart

Written by **Sara Mullins**
Photography by **Lance C. Bell**



Bob relaxes at home among just a few of his many paintings; this particular one is a view of Deep Creek Lake.

After a long and fulfilling career as educator, administrator, businessman and community volunteer, Bob Rodeheaver of Oakland now enjoys a new career, exploring a lifelong love of art. “It’s important for people to think about what to do when they retire,” he believes. His preferred medium is watercolor and his favorite subject is landscapes.

“I just love doing it,” he says, recalling his enjoyment of sketching during childhood. “I like to follow the light.” Bob cites his love of gardening, his wife’s photographs, and the artwork of Monet and Matisse as sources of inspiration. His subjects include barns on Turkeyneck Road, sheep grazing in a field, Oakland’s historic train station and varied scenes of Deep Creek Lake. One of his daughters suggested that he might find inspiration at Dolly Sods, West Virginia. His visit there resulted in a series of seven paintings, including an autumn scene featuring fiery red huckleberry bushes amidst windblown evergreens and rock

outcroppings. Bob’s paintings evoke a timeless sense of simplicity and serenity.

Bob grew up in rural Preston County, West Virginia, where he attended a one-room school through the eighth grade before moving on to Bruceton High School. At age 15, he met his future wife Rosetta while taking piano lessons from her mother.

After graduating from high school, Bob headed to Morgantown and West Virginia University, where he earned a bachelor’s degree in history and art education. During his college years, he and Rosetta began dating and eventually married. Bob went on to complete a master’s degree in secondary education administration and supervision.

In 1952, Bob was ready to begin his career. He accepted a teaching position at Southern High School in Garrett County, where he spent five years teaching English, Art and



Social Studies. He then served as principal of the Oakland Center Street Elementary School for four years. By this time, he and Rosetta had established a family. Bob then moved on to Northern High School, where he was principal for five years. Next, he served as principal at Southern High School from 1961 to 1973. Bob then moved to the Garrett County Board of Education, where he worked for 10 years as Director of Curriculum and Supervisor of Secondary and Middle Schools. During that period, he helped develop the county's Gifted & Talented Program for grades 2 through 8. "We wore many hats," he says of that period.

By 1983, Bob was ready to retire and reacquaint himself with his artistic inclinations. He picked up his paintbrush but was then approached with an offer to work as a field representative for Woodmen of the World

Life Insurance. He ended up in a management position for more than 10 years.

Amidst all the activity involved with work and family, Bob found time to volunteer in his community and at his church. When his son Randy was a Cub Scout, Bob became a Cub Master and helped with activities, awards banquets and various gatherings. For years, he was active in the Oakland Rotary Club. Believing that their children should be exposed to people from other cultures, Bob and Rosetta hosted high school and college exchange students for 14 years through the Rotary International Exchange Program. One of those students recently traveled from Brazil to help celebrate Bob's 80th birthday.

At 65, Bob finally retired, resolved to become serious about his art career. His Oakland home has ample sources



of natural light. "It's wonderful for working in art," he says happily.

"I give most of my paintings to my kids," Bob says. "I never tried to sell them. I've donated some to the Garrett County Historical Society." For a man who has given so much of his time and talent to family, friends and community, this comes as no surprise.

Oakland Train Station,
painted in 2003.

Dolly Sods, West Virginia.



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