

# Karl Zerbe—He's Retiring

Karl Zerbe, Florida State's artist-in-residence, is retiring from his teaching duties at the University, but he will not retire his paint brush and palette.

Zerbe said, "I'm going to stay here in Tallahassee because I like it here and because I've just added a studio onto my home." The artist, who is retiring for health reasons after 17 years as an art professor at Florida State, added, "I will continue painting."

Acknowledged as one of the masters of contemporary expressionism, Zerbe was the foremost painter in encaustic (painting with hot wax) until 1948. Most American artists working in that medium today have studied under him.

After developing a serious allergy to encaustic, he was forced to find other means of creating his major works. After one of his students developed the first plastic paint, polymer tempera, Zerbe turned to this medium and worked with it for 10 years until acrylics appeared. He adopted the medium because it was usable on a wider variety of surfaces and offered more flexibility. Today the artist works mostly in acrylics or a combination of collage and acrylics.

His deep life-long interest in wildlife, and birds in particular, is reflected in current works which include many dramatic images of birds.

One project of special interest to Tallahasseeans was the series of twelve Zerbe birds which were silkscreened last year by members of the community at LeMoyne Art Foundation for an exhibit there which received national coverage.

The professor has gained great respect as a

teacher and has enjoyed teaching "tremendously," he said. "I'm very sorry I cannot keep up teaching. I learned more from my students than they've learned from me. They've kept me young."

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**FLORIDA STATE PRESIDENT** Stanley Marshall said, "Not only Professor Zerbe's students, but the University as a whole, will miss a teacher of his caliber. Having a man of his stature on our faculty has been an honor for the state of Florida."

The German-born artist studied at the Debschitz Art School in Munich with Joseph Eberz and Karl Caspar who was a follower of Edvard Munch, an outstanding expressionist of the time. Zerbe also studied at the Munich Academy of Art.

The painter was only 19 when he had his first one-man show in 1922 at the Gurlitt Gallery in his native Berlin.

Zerbe's early works were labeled "subversive" and "degenerate" by the Nazi regime and were removed from German Museums in 1934. That same year he emigrated to the United States where he held his first American one-man exhibition at Harvard University.

He was with the Boston Museum of Fine Arts for 17 years before coming to Florida State in 1954. He is associated with the Lee Nordness Galleries in New York and plans to have a one-man show there next winter. His plans also include a one-man show in Tallahassee at that time.

Zerbe's works hang in numerous private collections throughout the country as well as in many of the major art museums.

July 26, 1971

Dr. Stanley Marshall  
Office of the President  
Florida State University  
Tallahassee, Florida

Dear President Marshall:

Thank you for your most welcome letter of July 8th. I am most appreciative of the honor, and it is a wonderful climax to a long career. Of course I had been wondering, as we all do, how retirement would affect me. My painting is my prime concern but contact with students has always been a great joy and extremely important to me. To be without it, suddenly, I thought might be a very uncomfortable shock. Your kind action gives me a symbolic connection with the young people and with the University for which I have developed a great affection.

Very sincerely yours,



THE FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY TALLAHASSEE 32306

Office of the President

July 8, 1971

Dr. Karl Zerbe  
1807 Atapha Nene  
Tallahassee, Florida 32301

Dear Professor Zerbe:

As your friend and admirer, I regret to see you go, although I am happy that you will be free to devote more time to your art.

Your presence on the faculty has been an inspiration not only to your students, but to your colleagues and friends in the administration as well. Your presence will continue to be felt here through the tangible and intangible contributions you have made to the University.

I hope this new phase of your career is fulfilling and happy. With kind personal regards.

Sincerely,

  
Stanley Marshall  
President

SM/gs

THE FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY  
TALLAHASSEE

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

July 8, 1971

Dr. Karl Zerbe  
1807 Atapha Nene  
Tallahassee, Florida

Dear Dr. Zerbe:

I am pleased to inform you that your appointment as Professor Emeritus has been approved effective July 1, 1971. We are happy to have you continue your relationship with Florida State University in this capacity.

This letter brings to you our best wishes.

Sincerely yours,

  
Stanley Marshall  
President

SM/de