

2014 Artist's Original Artwork and First Poster Kick Off TBLA Bass Unlimited Fundraising

Artist Ron Kidwell's poster, "Willie Catchim," is already a hit among Bass Unlimited poster collectors and the general public. His original artwork from which the poster was created and the poster numbered one sold for big bucks at the Poster Unveiling and Auction held last Thursday evening (April 3) at Wildwood Resort. The event kicked off Toledo Bend Lake Association's (TBLA's) 2014 Bass Unlimited fund raiser. All moneys made from the fundraiser are used for projects to improve the Lake and surrounding community.

Over one hundred TBLA Bass Unlimited supporters gathered to enjoy fabulous food and beverages, visit with friends, and view the art displayed for the auction, in the Conference Center at Wildwood Resort on beautiful Toledo Bend Lake. The Poster Unveiling and Auction has become a much-awaited annual gala and signals the start of TBLA's Bass Unlimited fund raiser which culminates with the Bass Unlimited Banquet on May 30 at Cypress Bend Pavilion.

The center at Wildwood was decorated for the event by Debbie Nichols, owner of Nichols, Inc., and her talented staff. Beautiful floral arrangements made up of thistle, yellow forsythia, and grapevine rose from tall vases to decorate the tables. These floral arrangements were surrounded by fishnets to project the essence of water with glass fish, driftwood, and candlelit lanterns. Ms. Nichols also sponsored and printed the beautiful color Poster Unveiling programs prepared by Marlene Pitt.

Mr. Ted Dove, President of TBLA, welcomed guests to the event, led the group in prayer and the Pledge of Allegiance, and then introduced Mistress of Ceremony, Rhonda Dean, who, with husband Tim Dean, were 2014 Poster Coordinators. Mrs. Dean introduced this year's poster artist Ron Kidwell of Stonewall, LA, and poster sponsor First Guarantee representative Cindy Ezernack. The sponsors, along with the artist, lifted the cloths to reveal the original oil painting artwork from which the 2014 Bass Unlimited Poster was made, along with Poster #1, to rounds of applause. The poster features a three young boys fishing from a boat on Toledo Bend Lake where one of the boys has snagged a large bass.

Mrs. Dean thanked First Guarantee for its sponsorship and presented Poster #2 to them, a tradition at the unveiling. Ms. Ezernack expressed her appreciation for the poster and First Guarantee's excitement over their sponsorship. She thanked all those involved in making the Unveiling a success.

In addition to the poster sponsors, other organizations and people were instrumental in making the event a success by helping to underwrite the costs of the unveiling. Mrs. Dean recognized these sponsors by group. **Gold Sponsors** included Ted Dove & Conestoga-Rovers & Associates; Nichols, Inc.; Wildwood Resort; and the Town of Many. **Silver Sponsors** were Buddy Wood, Agent, State Farm Insurance; First State Bank, Hemphill; Leah V. Byles, D.D.S.; Judge Stephen Beasley; and Warren Meadows Funeral Home. **Bronze Sponsors** were Frankie Howard, State Representative; Basic Trends Hair Salon, Hemphill; Ben & Myra Smith; Carla M. Morgan, CPA, Hemphill; Fisherman's Village Lodge, Hemphill; Margaret Zammit of In-Style Hair Design; Randy & Deb Pennington; and Toledo Town Inn.

Mrs. Dean then introduced the auctioneer, Kevin McDonald, who took the stand and began the auction of the four pieces of art. He worked the crowd to prompt the highest bids possible for all four pieces. Art showman Bill Adams displayed the art to the audience while spotters Mike Randolph and Randy Pennington helped point out bidders to McDonald.

The first piece to be auctioned was the signed and framed Poster #1. Bidding closed at \$500 with Daniel Bennett, a representatives from the Bank of Montgomery, placing the winning bid.

At Right: Artist Ron Kidwell (second from left) with auction winners of Poster #1 from Bank of Montgomery (from left): Linda Guay, Debra Funderburk, and Daniel Bennett. (Photo by John Toliver)



After bidding closed on the poster, auctioneer McDonald cranked up the bidding for the original oil from which the 2014 Poster was printed. This framed piece sold to Ted & Carolyn Dove for \$1,150.



At Left: Artist Ron Kidwell (center) with Ted and Carolyn Dove who placed the winning bid of \$1,150 for the original oil painting of "Willie Catchim" from which the 2014 TBLA Bass Unlimited Poster was made. (Photo by John Toliver)

Next up for bid were original paintings provided by former poster artists Norma Godwin (2013 Poster Artist) and Elaine Echels (2012 Poster Artist). Norma Godwin's painting, "End of the Cove," featured a peaceful cove on the lake surrounded by trees. It sold to Mike and Melody O'Brien for \$600. Elaine Echels' painting, "Fishing on Papa's Dock," shows three small children fishing from their grandfather's dock on the lake. It sold to Don and Virginia Burkett for \$400.



Mike & Melody O'Brien hold the original art "End of the Cove" by last year's poster artist Norma Godwin after placing the winning bid of \$600 during the auction. (Photo by John Toliver)



Don & Virginia Burkett pose with the original artwork "Fishing on Papa's Dock" by Elaine Echels that they won for \$400 during the auction bidding. (Photo by John Toliver)

To complete the activities for the evening, Mrs. Dean thanked the winners for their generous bids, expressed appreciation to all those who attended the unveiling for their continued support, and thanked TBLA members and others for their hard work to make the Unveiling a successful event.

The 2014 Bass Unlimited Poster sells unframed for \$20 each and framed for \$40. They can be purchased at the Nichols store in Many or through the TBLA web site, **www.toledobendlakeassociation.com**. They will also be available at the Bass Unlimited Banquet and Auction on Friday, May 30, at the Cypress Bend Pavilion.