

Artist's final brush stroke came too soon

By Robert Schimmel

I began this column a few days ago with various ideas and differing directions that had yet to coalesce into a final "platform" of content when distractions intervened and two days slipped by more quietly than a whisper. But the pace and activity belied the whisper, and then came news Nov. 30 of the passing of the very talented and accomplished fine artist, Reiko Hervin, that threw me into a mental spaghetti bowl of disjointed musings, heartbreaks, anger, projections, appreciation and fondness.

Death is seldom timely, and in Reiko's case it came completely unannounced, even after three-plus weeks of grim facts and medical overtime that began to give hope for a recovery from her horrific traffic accident. And thus the nonplussed emotion that at the same instant wanted to rage within me for the defense and return of such a kind and talented individual committed to her artistic passion and the creation of beauty.



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One didn't have to know Reiko well (she and I were just casual art friends) to feel her joy for life and her chosen occupation as well as see this exuberance in her lovely face and gorgeous paintings. Although a local in activity while living with her husband, Kurt, and son, Heroki, in Wellington,

Reiko's background was clearly international, and the love she had for art and painting came from her upbringing and studies in Japan.

My understanding is that she moved to the United States in 1993 and pursued her art career and romance with watercolor continuously to the present. Relating to her passion and also being a teacher, I watched with high regard her efforts and the results she achieved the last several years as her watercolor classes and student followings increased. There is no lack of instruction or talent in her field of art, and the students of hers I met always had praise and appreciation on their lips. Clearly, she'd begun to receive the recognition and success, in its best sense, that was well earned and never taken for granted.



"When time
stands still"

So what makes someone like Reiko unusual and able to live what might be considered such a joyful and productive life? It could be something as simple as a dream or vision for one's life that is being actively pursued, because even she had her share of hardship to which she claimed no excuse or victimization. There seems to me to be some dreamer in all of us, and, when you add the creative propensity and mindset of an artist, this often equates to a willing acceptance of the "debt" for even a portion of the dream's manifestation. To this end Reiko lived her dream and even spelled it out in her website name, www.reikodreamart.com, and upbeat promotions.

I believe artists and all creative individuals have an innate responsibility to “pay it forward” by modeling the kind of spirit that nurtures joy, love, peace, gratitude, generosity, etc., and inspires others. Likewise, these same artists have a unique product that results from the gift they are given which may, to some degree, be a tangible legacy of wonderful and timeless memories for those close and who follow. We have been blessed by just such an artist who has touched many and will positively influence many more for years to come.

Thank you for the gift, Reiko, and my (our) heartfelt condolences and prayers go out to your family.

Robert Schimmel is a professional artist and teacher in South Lake Tahoe as well as host of “Lake Tahoe Art Scene” on KTHO radio on Thursdays at 5:15pm.