

**WAYNE HOGAN  
A GIFTED MAN**

By Sarah Holloway: Special to the Herald-Citizen  
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I like to draw,” Wayne Hogan told me, “and I do it because I like to do it, and it’s about the only thing that I can do.”



Wayne is a prolific producer of unique cartoons, poems, essays, art and chapbooks that fill bookshelves and closets in his home and have been on display at the Art a la carte Gallery on Cookeville’s West Side almost from its opening.

(Pictured: Artist and author Wayne Hogan stands amidst some of his work at his home office. Photo by

Ty Kernea, Herald-Citizen staff).

His work has appeared in a wide selection of magazines, newspapers and literary journals over the years, from an illustration for an ad in the prestigious “New Yorker” magazine to the local Herald-Citizen. His cartoons and essays also appeared in “Cookeville’s Finest” magazine, published by Mike McCloud during the ‘90s. In the late 1990’s, he founded his own press named “little books press” and has published some 40 books of his own work, plus a few for other authors and some that he has co-authored with other writers.

I’ve never seen Wayne without a jacket and freshly pressed shirt, looking dapper and well-groomed. I can’t imagine him wearing rumpled blue jeans and a t-shirt. Like many gifted people, his manner is unassuming and always gentlemanly and considerate.

When I asked whether he liked doing outdoor things, he said, “Don’t hunt; don’t climb mountains; don’t garden. We don’t have room for a garden at our place in town and we can’t keep a houseplant alive much more than a week. I like to read a lot and I’m a pretty sedentary person-probably too much so for my own good.”

I’ve known Wayne as a writer and artist but was only vaguely familiar with his work. When I visited him for this interview at his home, I was flabbergasted at the amount of work he does and has done for many years. His home is spotless and inviting with walls covered with his art and decorated in cool comfort by a sure hand and eye, which he assured me was his wife, Susan’s.

He doesn't have an agent and admits he's not into commercial marketing. "I'm not a sales person," he told me. "I just do things and they mostly go into shoe boxes or closets or both. Mainly what I do is for my own satisfaction – it's just an enjoyable activity."

His talent as an artist, photographer and writer is clear, but he's never taken a course in either writing or art. He was born in Oklahoma City in 1934 and grew up on a farm about 35 miles southeast of Oklahoma City, where art of any kind was not a topic of conversation or thought.



"They were farmers," Wayne said. "they just didn't do that sort of thing – didn't talk about it – didn't value it – it wasn't part of our life. My mom and dad were divorced when I was three or four years old and my mom and I moved in with an uncle and grandmother and grandfather and always a couple of dogs. It was a big farm but was mostly just woods and uncultivated land, and I went to a one-room grade school with a pot-bellied wood stove.

(Picture: Wayne and Susan Hogan celebrate white wedding day in 1967).

"I wasn't encouraged to assert myself or to think I had anything special above anybody else – sort of that 'Don't raise above your raisin' philosophy. When I look back, I'm amazed at what a weird person I must have been on the farm in this isolated, desolate place where the nearest neighbor was over a mile away. I was an only child and I'd go out into the woods and dream up speeches like I could imagine Abraham Lincoln giving.

"I did start drawing some when I was probably in the third grade and spent a lot of my recess periods staying inside, drawing blackboard caricatures of Hitler, Mussolini and Tojo – the three biggies – the bad guys in World War II. I got pretty good at drawing profiles of these three characters, but I was trying to be too realistic in my drawing and I wasn't good at that. So I slacked off and talked myself out of going in that direction.

"The teacher in that little one-room school told me that it had an attic that was full of books like the "encyclopedia Britannica" that were gathering dust and wasps and stuff. I went up there and opened one up and found it had lessons in German. I got fascinated with these words so I asked the teacher if I could take some of the books home. She let me and I got into memorizing a whole bunch of German words. If I had some fellow members of this 'learning German' tribe, maybe we could have done something, but I was just doing it on my own. I still remember a whole bunch of this that I picked up in the fourth and fifth grades in that one-room school in Oklahoma."

Wayne entered high school but dropped out in his sophomore year.

“I didn’t have any special interest in anything,” he said. “I was just floating around with no purpose, so when I reached my 17<sup>th</sup> years, I got my mom to sign the papers to let me join the Navy.”

After basic training in San Diego, Wayne was sent to Guam.

“We were living in California then,” he said, “but I was a kid who had no worldly experience whatsoever. The farthest away from home I’d been, except for the move from Oklahoma to California, was to the next town five or six miles away.”



He spent 18 months on Guam and then, during the Korean War, was assigned to the aircraft carrier Philippine Sea that went all over the South China Sea. He remained on this ship for over a year and said, “I liked it because it took me to places I’d never dreamed I would go to. But I was only about 19 so didn’t appreciate what I was into.

“At one point, we were within sight of North Korea and were sending planes out to attack them, but I was just doing my work on the ship, going to bed, having a meal, as if nothing in the world was going on. I had no idea that I was in the middle of something historic and didn’t understand what Harry Truman called the ‘Korean Peace Action.’ If a bomb had dropped on our ship, it might have jarred me awake.”

(Pictured: Wayne Hogan in Oklahoma with his dog, Dempsey, at age 7 or 8).

Wayne’s job was working in the bake shop,” one of the easiest jobs on the ship,” he said. “We (there were about six of us) made our bread and cake and stuff for everybody on the ship – about 2,000 people.”

He got out of the Navy in 1955, after the Korean War was over and returned to Oklahoma where he attended Oklahoma Baptist University in Shawnee and then Central State College (now Central State University) in Edmond, where he graduated in 1961 with a B.S. degree.

He met his ‘miracle wife’ Susan in Atlanta, when he was working for the state employemtn office and she also had a temporary summer job with the state. They were married in 1967 and have been together for 45 years.

Susan Hogan is a well-known award-winning real estate broker who’s been with American Way Real Estate in Cookeville for 33 years.

“I just marvel at what she does,” Wayne said. “She’s way smarter than me.”

He and Susan moved to Cookeville in late 1973 after Wayne got his Master’s degree from the University of Tennessee in Knoxville and a PhD from Tulane University in New Orleans. Immediately after getting his PhD, he took a job teaching sociology at Tennessee Tech University beginning the spring quarter in 1974.

“I had just started teaching at Tech when my mom became very ill and passed away,” he said.

During his tenure at TTU, he had over 30 research studies published in social science journals and books here in the states and in Germany, Australia and India.

“during all those years of formal education and preparation, I guess I was thinking about being a teacher,” he said. “There were no teachers in my family; the highest schooling of any of my close relatives ever finished was eighth grade, so I was the first one in the family to graduate from college.”

He became disenchanted with teaching, however, saying, “I had some good students but there were too many who didn’t seem to realize what being a student was all about, plus I probably wasn’t all that good a teacher, so I didn’t think teaching was the proper place for me.”

After leaving Tennessee tech, Wayne did freelance photography for quite a while. “Country Living Magazine” used about three of my photo essays, but I had a distinct lack for what it takes to sell yourself.”

In spite of that, he became a frequently published writer in many literary journals and “The Christian Science Monitor” newspaper where he tied the record for having the most poems accepted at one time. The “Monitor” also accepted a picture he drew of his and Susan’s favorite basset hound, “Sweet Baby.”

For many years he has contributed writing and art for anthologies and other works published by “Kings Estate Press” in St. Augustine, FL. For about the past 25 years his artwork and writing have appeared in every issue of the venerable literary journal, “Abbey,” published in Columbia, MD. The editor there calls him her “resident artist in absentia.” For several years the editor of the “Lilliput Review” has regularly used his poems and drawings.

Wayne was selected Writer of the Year by the Cookeville Creative Writers Association in 1992 and as Outstanding Artist in 2006 by the Cookeville Arts Council.

At one point he received an advance payment for a book of cartoons from the renowned literary editor Gordon Lish at the publishing firm Alfred A. Knopf – a heady experience for a country boy from Oklahoma. Lish had been editor of “Esquire” magazine for a

number of years and has edited and championed acclaimed writers such as Raymond Carver, Barry Hannah and Richard Ford. Before the book deal was completed, Lish, who was a somewhat controversial editor, left Knopf and Wayne's hopes for book publication flew out the window, but he kept his moderate advance.

With his impressive publishing credits, I was surprised Wayne didn't have agent.

"I don't do it to make a living," he told me. "I do it because it's a healthy activity for me. I don't have to have anybody's approval as to whether they want this picture here or another picture there. I put what I want in it and if somebody likes it – fine. If they don't, I don't care.

I guess anybody who does 'creative type' work would like to have a wider commercial audience, but I haven't done much to accomplish that. Maybe there's something psychological going on there that's kept me from putting my foot forward and saying, "here – look at this," I just don't do a lot of that."

Success can't be measured only by money. Wayne Hogan follows his Muse along his own "Road Less Traveled" without overweening ambition or discontent because, "I like to write and draw and I do it because I like to do it and I can do it.

\*Read about other interesting people of Putnam Co., TN at: <http://www.ajlambert.com>