

LAWRENCE BEHUNEK

Lawrence Behunek, a native of Pittsburgh, majored in painting and photography at Edinboro State University where he received a degree in fine arts in 1975. He relocated to the Washington, D.C., area shortly thereafter, where he worked for over 30 years as a graphic designer, illustrator and artistic director. Since his retirement in 2013, he has refocused his creative energies on the fine arts.

Although a landscape painter at heart, Behunek is a modernist when it comes to his architectural and decorative preferences. While on a field trip with his high school art class, mentored by a devoted art teacher, he visited Frank Lloyd Wright's "Falling Water." Not only was the house structurally and visually stimulating, it was filled with paintings of some of the great masters from the Modernist period. Torn between painting and architecture as a career, he took the route with less math and majored in fine art, but has been an architecture buff from that day onward.

While raising a family on an artist's budget and trying to provide an aesthetically pleasing home with some of Wright's features, Behunek initiated renovation of a small rambler in Fairfax, Virginia, in 1984. To generate extra income for building materials, he painted on weekends and evenings, creating landscapes in the style of the Pennsylvania Impressionists for the traditional community around Washington, D.C., as well as color-coordinated abstractions for the interior design market. He was also frequently commissioned to create replicas of the works of the great masters, from Bonnard to Van Gogh. The many years of painting in so many diverse styles and media, along with his illustrative, photographic and design skills, have given his works spontaneity and a wide range of expertise. (As for the house, it remains a work in progress.)

Among Behunek's major works are commissions by architects searching for large-scale art for some of Washington's most notable buildings. His largest, a 7 x 12-foot mixed media on canvas, is hanging in the auditorium of the Brookings Institution. In a 2013 juried show at Oatlands Plantation of Leesburg, his painting *Harper's Ferry* took the award for Best Painting in Show. U.S. Senator Tim Kaine, Governor of Virginia at the time, attended the opening of his photographic exhibit *Legacy of the Land*, a fund-raiser for land conservation within the state, the result of a two-year project Behunek took on while frequently painting with a group of plein air artists at a farm in Madison, Virginia, which resulted in 30 dramatic photos of the Shenandoah's piedmont.

While most of his works are sold to private collectors, they have also been shown in numerous galleries, at one-man shows and purchased for permanent display by such business organizations as Honeywell Corporation; Sheraton International Conference Centers; Chambers Design; 1st American Bank; Lewis, Mitchell, and

Moore; Far Jewitt Associates; Sydene Interiors; International Securities; Powell /Tate Associates; D.C. National Bank; The Washington Sheraton; Chez Fernand of Baltimore, Maryland; The Commander Hotel, Ocean City, Maryland; Park Vista Complex, Crystal City, Virginia; Resource Investments, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; and Rees Broome and Diaz, McLean, Virginia.