

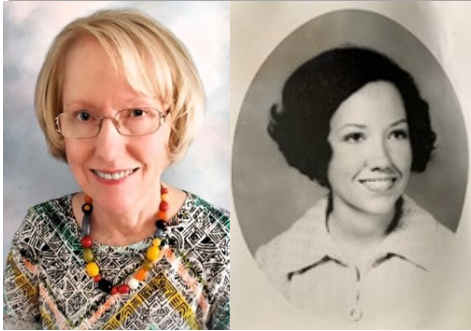


# Waterworks

A Publication of the Louisiana Watercolor Society, established in 1968

Special LWS Memoriam and Tribute Newsletter - April 2024 by: Emily Efferson

## In Honor of Monica Stewart Bishara



**Monica Stewart Bishara:** Baton Rouge, LA passed away on August 10, 2023 after battling cancer for many years. She was born in San Antonio, Texas where numerous family members still reside today. Growing up in a military family, Monica experienced life in numerous locations including France, Germany, Oklahoma, New York, finally settling down in Louisiana. Thankfully Monica's parents recognized her to be an extraordinary and gifted artist at a very young age, so they enrolled her in art lessons as a little girl while living in France. She continued to develop her talents throughout her entire life.

**College Years:** Monica graduated from Our Lady of the Lake University in 1972 with a Bachelor of Arts Degree in French and Art. She then earned a Master of Arts degree in French from Tulane University in 1974 where she met her future husband

**James "Jim" Johannes Bishara** who was also attending graduate school at Tulane University (Chemical Engineering). Jim was born in Germany when his Dutch mother met an American soldier during World War II and was six months old when he and his family moved to the USA (to Boston).



**The Love Story:** During our visit with Jim he told us that he somehow came into possession of the keys to the girls' dorm (the one in which Monica lived), but he had no idea as to how he came to have those keys. He said he couldn't remember back that far. He did say he remembered that there was a piano in the girls' dorm so he went there in the evenings to practice. It sounded like a plausible story. Anyway, he said he would let himself into the girls' dorm so he could practice playing the piano each evening, although he readily admitted he never got much better at playing it. Hmm, makes you wonder just how much he practiced. Well...that's his story and he's sticking to it! He said he met Monica's sister first but then she would usually cook dinner for the three of them in the evening...and since he couldn't cook, this arrangement worked out well for him. He remembered at the time he was kind of sweet on another girl, but once he met Monica and she set her eyes on him and then later when she decided she was going to marry him, things quickly changed! It took no time for his heart to belong to her and her alone and he never looked back...or at the other girl ever again! They married in 1975 and settled down in Metairie where they had and raised two children, James and Elizabeth. Monica retired after teaching art and language at Ursuline Academy in New Orleans after 20 years. Jim said they moved years later from Metairie to Baton Rouge where she worked out of her studio. Jim said they settled on Baton Rouge for several reasons but mainly because it was a little higher than below sea level.



**Art Organizations:** Monica earned her signature membership status in the Louisiana Watercolor Society. She served as their president twice and in numerous other board positions. She also served on the boards of the Baton Rouge Art League, the Associated Women in the Arts, the National League of American Pen Women, and she volunteered with Operation Mainstream to teach reading to adults.

**Louisiana Watercolor Society (LWS)** would like to extend a personal heartfelt thank you recognizing Monica for all the hard work and many hours and years she spent serving LWS on the board and volunteering in many other areas. Her good deeds have not gone unnoticed or unappreciated and she will be forever missed. LWS would not be where it is today without her selfless hours of work, accomplishments and dedication to the organization. Much appreciation and many thanks also go to her husband **Jim Bishara** for always supporting her art and the work she did for LWS, watercolor and art in general. Much Love and thanks from LWS to the entire Bishara family. Thank you again! *obituary:* <https://www.resthavenbatonrouge.com/obituaries/monica-bishara>

# Tribute to Monica Bishara



A favorite pastime ... plein air painting and journal sketching



Peace, Love and Roses won the Purchase Award at the Baton Rouge Art League Annual Exhibition and will be part of their permanent collection of Louisiana artists at the LA State Archives. Many thanks to the BR Art League for selecting my painting.



Monica's last painting **BROKEN** completed in May prior to her death in August. Her family found this painting after she passed. It features a glass cup that she had painted many years ago, only now the glass is broken. The shadows from the broken glass recall angel's wings. Monica's family believes that she was sending them a message recognizing that cancer had broken her body. She knew that the end was near, and that angels were waiting to take her home.

## A few pieces of Monica's Artwork



# Tribute to Monica Bishara



A Bouquet of Roses

**The Rose Project "DOSES"** (22"x30") watercolor - In the summer of 2014 Monica was diagnosed with uterine and ovarian cancer. This Bouquet of Roses she named DOSES had significant meaning in regard to her first round of chemotherapy treatments. The number of roses in the painting represents the number of chemo treatments, the baby's breath etched throughout represents the chemical formula for Taxol and Carboplatin (her two chemo meds) and if you look closely you can see a little medal with Mary nestled in the center.

Read the entire DOSES story at:  
<https://monicabisharaart.weebly.com/rose-project.html>  
and  
[https://monicabisharaart.weebly.com/uploads/3/0/8/5/3085441/doses\\_story\\_by\\_mbishara\\_2015.pdf](https://monicabisharaart.weebly.com/uploads/3/0/8/5/3085441/doses_story_by_mbishara_2015.pdf)



Jim Bishara showing Emily Efferson the meaningful areas to look for in the painting



Watercolor by Monica depicts buildings circa 1938 which became OFlag64 camp hospital (left) and the "white house" barracks (right) 1943-45

**OFlag64 Prisoner of War (POW)-LWS** received a donation in Monica's name from the **Friends of OFlag64**. It was a handwritten note on a beautiful notecard designed by Monica depicting one of her works of art (above). It explained that Monica's father **Captain Donald B. Stewart** was a Prisoner of War (POW) for over 2 years during World War II held by the Germans in Szubin, Poland at a Prison Camp called OFlag64. Monica painted and donated two of her artworks to the Friends of OFlag64 who are currently working towards building a POW Museum on the same grounds as the prison camp in Szubin. The notecards, one of Monica's first contribution to the Friends of OFlag64, are still used today to write to volunteers within their organization. The donation was signed from a descendent of another POW, Anne Haskot Kreuber, the daughter of OFlag64 Kriegy Nat Haskot.

(Note: Kriegy is U.S. & British slang for Kriegsgefangener-German for POW).  
<https://friendsofflag64.org/>

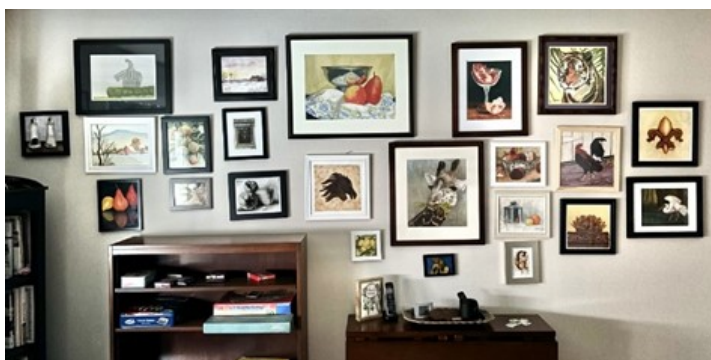
## Tour of Monica's Art Studio



## LWS Friends Remembering Monica



**From Annie Strack, LWS Member**—I met Monica Bishara shortly after I moved to Louisiana at the turn of the century, and we worked together along with a few other LWS Board members on a traveling exhibit we called the “5x5.” I was a newcomer and I felt so honored to be invited to exhibit with this small group of amazing artists and to be invited onto the LWS Board of Directors. Monica welcomed me with open arms, and after I moved away from Louisiana, she always stayed in touch with phone calls and emails to catch up with each other. Photos: **left:** Monica and I at an LWS Christmas party at NOMA, Dec 7, 2008. **right:** is the 5x5 Exhibition Proposal Cover, 2002.



**From Cathy Goodier, LWS Member** - I joined Monica many years ago when she was in charge of the newsletter and we worked together to produce it. I would generally take a copy back home with me to have copies made for mailing to those members who did not have email. We would work together at her house until lunch and then take a break. Many times, Jim would join us so it was nice to catch up on their activities. We took turns providing lunch and when we finished, Jim would clean up so we could get back to work. In the early years we used the WORD program to produce the newsletter. We had lots of laughs trying to move pictures and text boxes around to fit. Many times we completely lost a picture or text box, but after a few laughs we'd always find them. Then came Louise Hansen who introduced us to the PUBLISHER program. That was a real turning point for us and life changing. After Louise patiently taught us through many demonstrations as to how to use it, we finally were able to work on our own. We cut our hours on the newsletter in half by switching to PUBLISHER. What I enjoyed most was when we finished with the newsletter Monica would show me what paintings she was working on. I loved how she had so many of her paintings displayed in her studio. In fact, I liked it so much, I have done the same in my own studio at home. Monica will always have a special place in my heart. She was the strongest and most determined person I had ever had the pleasure of knowing. Rest in Peace, Monica!

**Henry Casselli (Artist and LWS Member & former International Judge) wrote:** I of course, have known Monica for the many years she has given to the Society and ultimately all of us who are members or exhibitors. If Monica wasn't serving as President, she ceaselessly continued to contribute by serving in one of many other officer positions as needed. As a native New Orleanian, I consider being an Honorary Life Member of LWS a High Honor. Please know, it is with a grateful and thankful heart I acknowledge how fortunate I have been to have had the opportunity to judge and exhibit in a Watercolor organization that has earned the stature and received the accolades this one has through the continued and devoted energies and efforts of special individuals like Monica.



March 2023 Archives Member Show Hanging - Claudia LeJeune, Monica Bishara, Peggy Kirby, Tracy Hebert, Kathy Stone & Jan Wilken

# LWS Friends Remembering Monica



**From Pio Lyons, LWS Member** I joined LWS in 2003 and oddly enough won a Ribbon in my 1st show. Pat Dubos was the judge. Monica was on the Board at that time and participated in every LWS exhibit in one way or the other. She was always on the scene helping in some way. I watched the Mississippi Watercolor Society go under because there were no Monica's to help run the show. She was very kind and patient helping me with online computer entries many times. She will be missed.



Art friends from way back when...can you name them all?



Monica and Carol Creel receiving awards with Yvette Creel and Louise Hansen on each end



2022 LWS International Awards



Monica & Louise Hansen Plein Airing at Houmas House

**From Emily Efferson, LWS Recording Secretary.** Thank You Monica for helping me learn the Publisher Program to produce the LWS newsletter and the international catalog for the past two years. It has been a rewarding experience for me to do both. Thank you for also encouraging me to serve on the LWS Board because I have thoroughly enjoyed serving. It has been my honor to gather all the little details about your life from your husband Jim and many of your friends in an effort to produce this special newsletter tribute to you. I know this small tribute cannot possibly do you justice in only a few pages, but hopefully LWS members will get to know a little more about how much you did for LWS throughout the many years you served and KNOW that **YOU GAVE IT YOUR ALL!**



Monica lunching with Louise Hansen at Houmas House



Lenny Brazy, Judi Betts, Henry Casselli Juror, Emma Palencia, and Nancy Dawson



Kathy Stone and Monica

## LWS Friends Remembering Monica



**Roni Thomas-Former LWS President** - What a talented artist, and an organized and giving leader we have lost! Monica's kind smile, her talented artwork, and her organized nature were gifts to LWS. She encouraged me to become an active LWS member and eventually serve as President also. She was my hero at LWS. She was always on top of every LWS event with her soft voice, her beautiful smile, and her organized ideas. We will always owe her for all she did for LWS. Thank you for honoring the soul, the backbone, and the talent of Monica Bishara. Thank you, Monica, for all you have given to LWS artists and for your loving nature!

**Peggy Kirby, LWS V.P. Board Member** I met Monica in 2022 when I was first elected to the LWS Board. I regret not having the chance to get to know her better. She reached out to offer her assistance and tirelessly answered the newbie's many questions. Once I was elected Vice President, I began to learn just how much LWS depended on Monica. I am still learning how many responsibilities she had assumed, website management, Mailchimp communication, membership and signature status tracking, document and photo archiving, exhibition entry spreadsheets, Dropbox linkages, audiovisual presentations....The list goes on and on. Monica did all of this – and all while battling cancer. You worked hard, Monica. We are grateful. May you now rest in peace.

**Louisiana Watercolor Society** appreciates and sends a huge **THANK YOU** to Monica Bishara for all she did for LWS. We lost a true friend, a leader, a hard worker and a talented artist when she passed. It's from the bottom of our hearts that we thank her for her endless hours of service and devotion she contributed to LWS. She gave it her all! We can never thank her and her family enough for all that she gave. **Thank You again Monica! May you now Rest in Peace.**



Louise Hansen, Monica Bishara, Theresa Beaubouef, Joleen Schiller & Larry Downs



LWS Lorraine Watry Workshop (2022 New Orleans)



LWS Carrie Waller Workshop (May 2023 - New Orleans)