



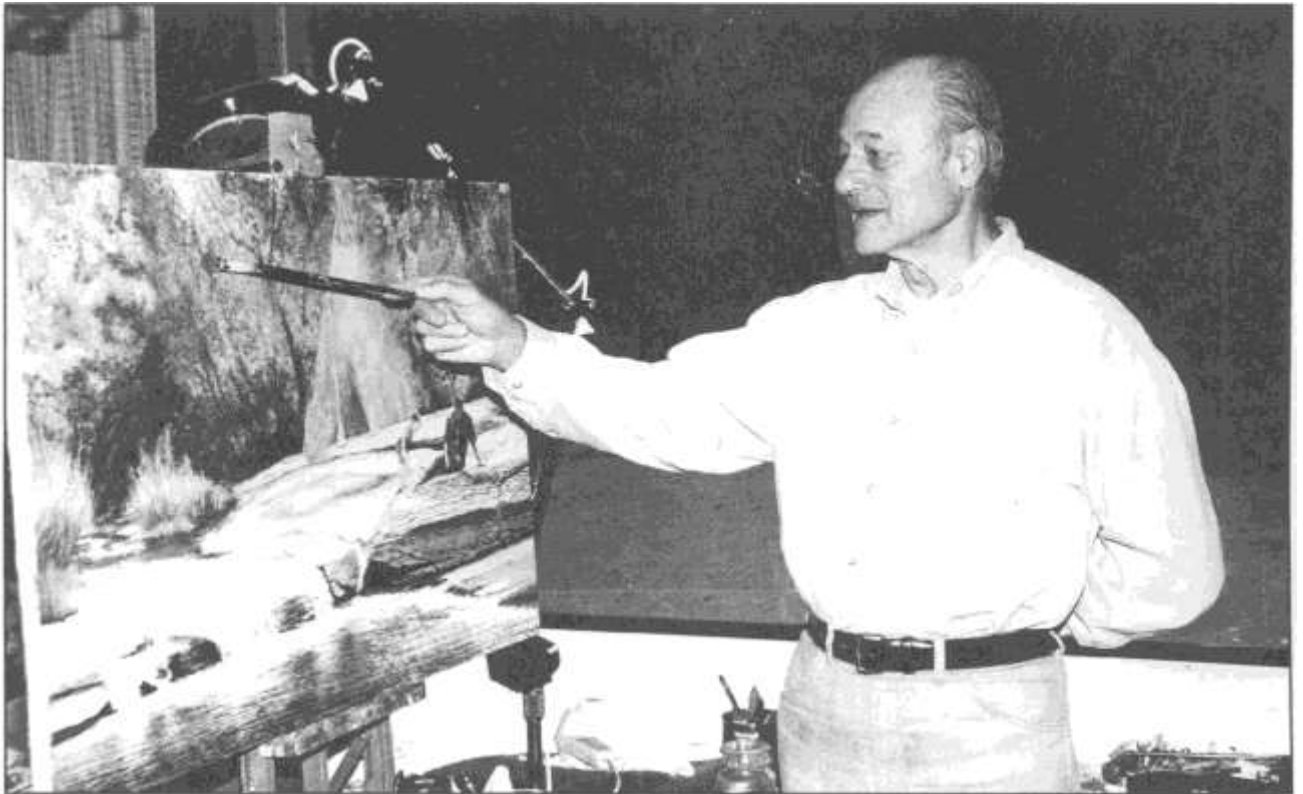
Land's End - Scott County, WI

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PROFILE:

Dr. Bernard Widen Proves Art Endures

By Irwin B. Robinson



DENTISTRY TRAINING HELPS ALUM ACHIEVE SUCCESS AS PAINTER

What do orthodontists choose to do when they retire? **In** the case of Dr. Bernard Widen, '44, after working all his professional life straightening malposed teeth and creating beautiful smiles, it was natural after his 1986 retirement for him to want to continue to create beauty. So he chose art as a new vocation.

Dr. Widen's career as an orthodontist gave him the training to be detail-oriented, an orientation he carried to his art. "Art has given my retirement a new life—a renaissance," Dr. Widen said. "What a wonderful discovery."

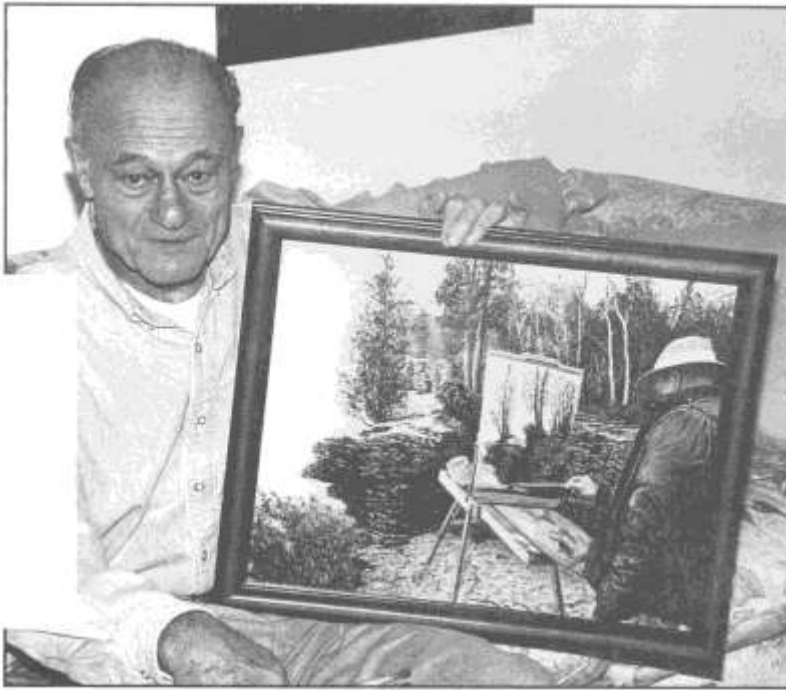
His subject range includes seascapes, landscapes, architecture, and portraiture, and his canvases are painted with vibrant colors and expressive patterns that create a striking dimension of vivid realism. The paintings of the old masters figure prominently as an influence in Dr. Widen's striving to achieve a high level of realism in his work.

When viewing Dr. Widen's paintings it is hard to believe that he had no formal art school training. The self-taught artist noted, "My dental and orthodontic training have helped provide me with good hand-eye coordination and discipline concerning details. And by painting every day, I have sharpened my technique and my skills."

Born in 1920, Widen spent the years of the Great Depression on Chicago's West Side where his father, Dr. Jacob Widen, was a practicing dentist. Deciding to follow the elder Widen's choice of profession, Bernard Widen attended Herzl Junior College and the YMCA College to obtain the prerequisites necessary for entry into the University of Illinois College of Dentistry.

Dr. Widen remembers Dean H.M. Marjerson and Professor of Operative Dentistry Dr. C.E. Hatch for their holistic approach to the art and science of dentistry. "This gave me a better appreciation of seeing each of my patients as a whole person rather than just a mouth with teeth," said Dr. Widen.

Following graduation in 1944 he served as a captain in the U.S. Army in Germany and Austria, where duty took



Dr. Bernard Widen displays one of his art works-with himself as the artist in the painting.

him to a concentration camp and an encounter with survivors of the Nazi Holocaust. That experience was so heart-wrenching that he asked for transfer to another location because of its psychological effect on him.

Upon discharge, Dr. Widen briefly joined his father in general dentistry on Chicago's North Side before starting his own downtown practice. Always a perfectionist, Dr. Widen recalls performing his own laboratory work on his patients' dental prostheses to assure top quality.

After 12 years in general dentistry, Dr. Widen decided he wanted to shift the focus of his practice to the specialty of orthodontia. Discouraged by U of I's and Northwestern's dental colleges because of the length of time he had been out of school, he applied to the Loyola University School of Dentistry.

Coincidentally, Dr. Joseph Jarabak, head of the Department of Orthodontics at Loyola, had been out of school about the same amount of time and also was Dr. Widen's age before he had begun graduate training in orthodontia. So he accepted Dr. Widen-on the condition that he take graduate courses and make good grades prior to being enrolled in the school's orthodontic program.

So Dr. Widen headed for Loyola's Water Tower Campus, where he took evening courses in psychology, philosophy, and language for two years and received "A" grades in all subjects. He was then enrolled in the fulltime graduate orthodontic program at Loyola, but found he still had to practice in his downtown office on Thursday evenings and Sundays to support his family.

In 1960, Dr. Widen earned his master's degree. His MS thesis involved a study using electromyography on facial muscles following the separation of banded teeth.

Dr. Widen opened a new specialty practice on Chicago's North Side, and after only a few years went back to Loyola as a teacher of basic orthodontia to undergraduates. "It was very fulfilling and enjoyable

For some time he had harbored beautiful visions of practicing in California, so he took the California Dental Boards and received a license to practice. After his youngest son graduated from high school, Dr. Widen sold his Chicago orthodontic practice and moved his family to the Golden State, where he associated with a group dental practice. But after a while, he became disenchanting and in 1986 moved back to Chicago.

At age 65, Dr. Widen did not want to begin a new practice and decided to try a new hobby. He took an evening art class at a local high school and completed his very first drawing: a charcoal sketch of a gym shoe that he had removed from his foot. He was so pleased with the drawing that he continued to pursue his art utilizing various media, such as colored pencils, graphite, acrylics, and finally, oils. Dr.

Widen found his greatest challenge and pleasure in painting with oils, particularly outdoor scenes and portraits.

One portrait resulted from a visit to Washington, D.C., where a politically influential friend invited Dr. Widen to lunch along with Senator Howard Metzenbaum (D-Ohio). The conversation quickly turned to art and Dr. Widen produced some photos of his paintings. The Senator was so impressed with a photo of a portrait Dr. Widen had done of a California couple that he commissioned the artist to paint his personal portrait from an old photograph of the Senator as a younger man.

Dr. Widen completed the portrait, but painted the Senator's features as he presently appears. Metzenbaum was extremely pleased with the painting and complimented Widen on his work.

Wally Moskow, an artist with the Figurative Art League in Evanston, IL, remarked, "Bernard Widen, whose training has been mainly in dentistry, has used this discipline to have the patience, concentration, and persistence to be a very good artist. He has the ability to bring his subject material together with excellent color and proportions."

Dr. Widen's paintings have been exhibited at various art galleries. Arthur Sahagian of the Arthurian Art Gallery in Skokie, IL, said, "Widen is very good and is an emerging artist having natural talent, dedicated to his artwork, and most importantly, continues to grow with each painting he renders." The North Shore Art League apparently agreed, as last summer its members chose him to exhibit his art at the Old Orchard Art Fair.

He and wife Dorothy have four grown children: Shari, Richard, Theodore, and Ronald, a practicing dentist and a 1985 graduate of the College, making for three generations of Widen dentists.

Besides being a talented artist, Dr. Bernard Widen also is an accomplished musician on the electric organ. In addition, he is an avid fisherman and boater, although art remains his main interest at present.

"I miss the practice of orthodontics and TMJ treatment, but my artwork has filled this void," he concluded.