



# Gary Q. Frields

*The Beautiful Life of*

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## The Story Begins

Born the middle son to beloved parents, Andy and Adine Frields, Gary Q. Frields began his charmed life in Waco, Texas, on March 12, 1946. His farcical, far-fetched, bitter-sweet adventure on this planet ended in Nacogdoches, Texas on August 24, 2013.

## Youth

His love of art and athletic competition began early in his education. Although unrequired, drawings accompanied all his classwork – even math and science. As captain of the football team, class president and class favorite, Gary blazed through high school and emerged a Baylor Bear. Football was his passion, but drawing was his first love. He graduated with his Bachelor of Fine Arts in 1969.

# Teacher, Maker, Mentor and Friend



O. Rufus Lovett

## Service

At the height of the Vietnam War, Gary's artistic and athletic talents were admired by the US Air Force and he was invited to train as a Motion Picture Specialist at Lowery AFB in Denver, Colorado. He was deployed to a motion picture complex in southern California after graduating "Outstanding Honor Graduate."

## Education

His love of art led him back to Texas and in 1973, he began his graduate studies under John Daniel at Stephen F. Austin State University, School of Art. Inspired by fellow students, kindred spirits and lifelong friends, this was a utopian time for Gary. He received his MA and MFA in drawing and sculpture and was hired as the chair of the art department at Kilgore College in 1978.

## Career

The eight years he spent working with the talented and dedicated students at KC brought him incredible memories and enduring friendships with fellow teachers.

In 1986 he returned to teach at SFA. He found his home in Nacogdoches - laughing, playing and making art - it was a dream come true. Gary was many things: intelligent, self-deprecating, generous, passionate, playful, fierce and kind. But, above all, he was happy. He attributed his charmed life and his great happiness to his family, his friends, his students and his soul mate, Tamara.

## Gifts

*For more than 35 years, Gary inspired and guided students in art and life. In lieu of flowers, please consider a donation to the Gary Q. Frields Art Scholarship. Make payment to: SFA Friends of the Arts: Frields Scholarship. C/O Linda Mock, SFASU School of Art, Box 13001 SFA Station, Nacogdoches, TX 75962*



# You're Invited

The Beautiful Gary  
Q. Frields Memorial

6 p.m.  
August 30, 2013

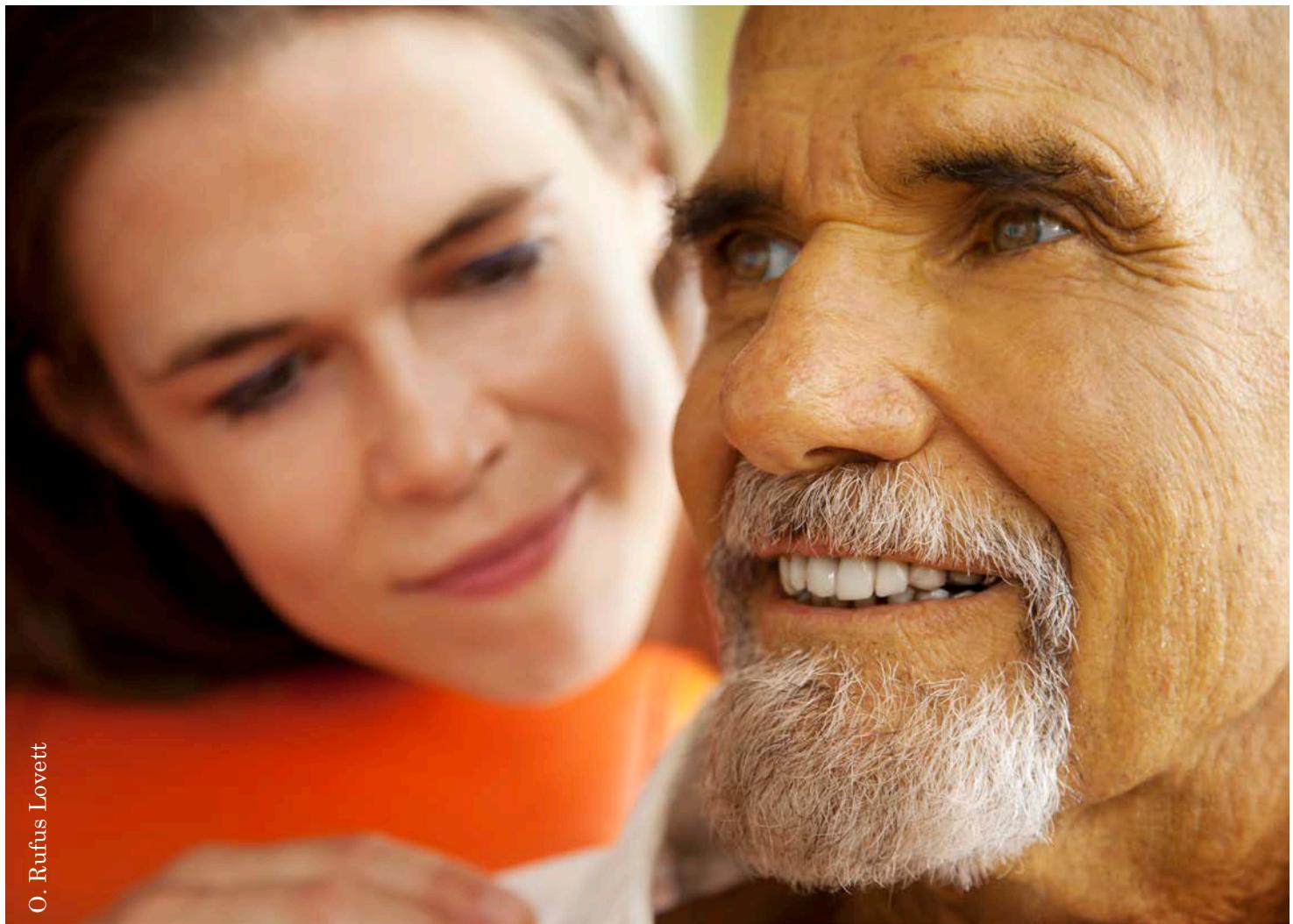
Pines Theater  
113 South 1st Street  
Lufkin, Texas

## Love

In 2004, the staunchly independent and supremely self-possessed Gary found the equally passionate and compassionate Tamara. His life was changed forever; it finally felt complete. Gary and Tamara were married in 2010. Their home was alive with cheerful laughter, witty mockery, and loads of monkey business. Together, they battled Gary's cancer, living each day in love and gratitude for having found each other.

## Celebration

Gary lived an original life, full of imagination and creativity, devoid of self-imposed limitations and conventional thinking. On August 30, 2013 at 6 p.m., celebrate his life less ordinary at the premiere showing of The Beautiful Gary Q. Frields Memorial at the Pines Theater, 113 South 1st Street, Lufkin, Texas.



O. Rufus Lovett

## Loving Family

Gary Frields is survived by his loving wife Tamara Robertson, endeared brothers Ed & Roy Frields and cherished nieces and nephews, Alisha Webre, Jennifer Schweizer, Ryan, Roger, & Chad Frields and Wesley, Patrick, Anthony & Daniel Newman.

He is also survived by his esteemed father and mother in-law, Mike and Annette Robertson, brother in-law Scott Newman, sisters in-laws Carrie Newman, Bev Frields, and Pat Frields.

## Honored Friends

Honorary pallbearers are Linda Mock, Pat Dolan, Angie Brewer, Jeff Brewer, Michael Donahue, O. Rufus Lovett, Russ Havard, Amy George, Ron King, Shaun Roberts, Chad Hines, Eloise Adams, Friends of the Arts, Philip Segrest, Andy Summers, Mike McClinton, Linda Warren, Franklin Willis, Isaac Powell, Doris Daniel, Barb Smith, UHS class of '64, Linda Lou Warren, Frank Hebert, Dr. Bryan Davis, Xavier Sanders, Allan Westmoreland, Mike Hampton, Nancy Brown, Anna Laperno, Harry Lampert, Jimmy Adcock, Ray Geildmire, Holly Anderson, Suzan Bryant, Ron Rand, Mary McCleary, Les Butler, Wally Knight, Ronnie Cawthon, Steve Neves, Reese Lynch, Rodney Willis, Rusty Cook, SFA students, faculty and staff, Kilgore College students and faculty, Michel Tubbs, Elsie and Roger Campbell, The Texas Association of Schools of Fine Arts, Brandy Best, Sophie-Hospice and Mr. Peanut.

# The Beautiful Life of Gary

Trying to put into a few words the memories we have of Gary is extremely difficult because we knew him for so many years – since the 1980s.

Probably the most outstanding things we will always remember about him were his incredible sense of humor and his talent as an artist. We always knew that whenever we would get together with him we would laugh until our faces ached. In fact, he was still making us smile even a couple of days before he passed away. As for his art, he could produce great thought provoking pieces or ones that made you laugh. In the future, whenever we see monkeys or Elvis we will have fond memories of the Beautiful Gary. Life will not be the same without him in the world.

*-Linda Mock  
& Pat Dolan*



Gary was a friend, mentor and an inspiration. His impact on my life is immeasurable. I can only hope to bring half as much joy and passion and inspiration to others. The world is a little less beautiful.

*-Jeff Brewer*

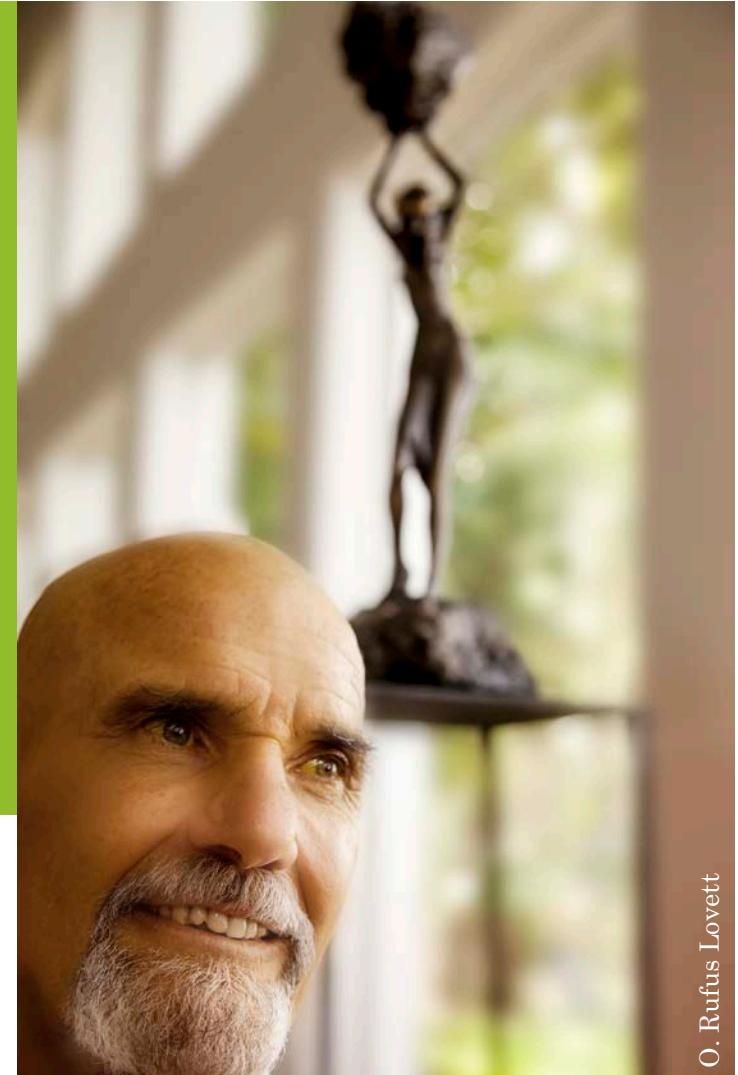
# The Beautiful Gary Q. Frields.

-O. Rufus Lovett

It was over 30 years ago when I met Frields. He took a position teaching art at Kilgore College where I was already teaching photography. We quickly bonded and our friendship immediately enhanced my life in respect to art and our shared beliefs and humor. During our tenure together at Kilgore College, we worked on exhibitions and graphic designs for the school. We traveled to Memphis together to visit Graceland during Elvis Week and later he became my professor as I attended SFA for post-graduate work in art. His imagination and vision was a wonderful influence on my personal photographic projects. His use of pop cultural icons in his art led to my *Kilgore Rangerette* project that later became a book.

He is a hero to many and certainly to the art world. In 1986 at Kilgore College he courageously defended the controversial *Night Winds* sculpture by John Daniels. Frields left his teaching position over that issue taking great sacrifices financially but soon continued his teaching at SFA. Not many teachers are willing to take risks of that nature but Frields is an artist without compromise and that metal is what makes him a real hero.

Much of Frields' art reflects his sense of humor as he interprets human behavior using recognizable iconic figures that often question much about our human nature. He balances the aesthetically and wonderfully crafted pieces with



O. Rufus Lovett

overtones of mystery and surprise about our beliefs and behavior as a society. His brilliant intellect is revealed deep in the fabric of his art.

The Beautiful Gary Q. Frields was a visionary, mentor of generations, humorist and a heroic artist without compromise. The artist we all hope to become. I see him on his pier, I see him at the gates of Graceland and I see him walking downtown Nacogdoches after an art opening with Tamara. He will always be a part of our lives as his inspiration is eternal.

-O. Rufus Lovett, August 25, 2013

# Eulogy for Frields

-Michael Donahue

We never called each other by our first names---I just called him *Frields* and he jokingly always referred to me as *Donaho*. When I think of him, I can visualize his distinctive signature---it is bold, confident and has a distinctive flair, which is personified in his life and art.

We became friends as fellow students at Stephen F. Austin State University and my first memories of him were at our joint art critiques. Mine were always brutal but he had a way of disarming the harshest criticism with his art and humor. He was creating incredibly original automatic drawings and topped off each session with a carefully wrapped road kill that pertained to the work---it was a multi-sensual experience! I snickered and laughed and admired his attitude of always pushing the limits—I really admired him...perhaps it was because we both came from conservative religious backgrounds and struggled with some of the same issues in becoming artists.



In college, I felt like an outsider looking in. Frields always understood that artists have different temperaments and express things differently. While we worked in totally different ways, he always backed me and supported my work even when others were highly critical.

After college we were both so naïve went we rode a van non-stop to New York to search for college teaching jobs. We quickly learned of the stiff competition we were up against, but the best part of the trip was getting to look at the art museums with Frields and wandering Times Square. Later we got to travel across Europe together and it was a once in a lifetime journey looking at art and gathering life experiences. I will always cherish the memories of sleeping on the beach below the Picasso Museum in Antibes, France, or eating crawfish on a rooftop on a small Swedish island called Ven. We always laughed...Everyone here today can empathize with his innate ability to make you laugh so hard that you face and stomach hurt.

Frields was one of the best teachers in the business. His students learned about art and life as he prepared them for their career journey...he was always about the students. Frields knew how to inspire and instill in them the joy of making art. His students loved him. He was truly an art evangelist and hearing him always left me anxious to try to emulate his teaching style and passion. I loved to hear his humor-filled and always profound talks on how lucky we were to create art and do what we loved to do--teach. His legacy will live on through his students and artwork. Many have become successful artists and teachers due to his dedication and inspiration.

He was a person of conviction and principle. He could always see the big picture and do what was right. When a piece of public art was censured in East Texas and he, his students and the idea of art were under attack---he spoke out and stood up. He was willing to walk away from a much-desired job because of his belief systems—he was right and the critics were wrong. Like most visionaries, he saw things others did not. When he served on job searches at the university, he always stood up for the best teacher who would help the department and students rather than the politics involved in such choices. He always wanted to do what was best for the students. I'm so proud that the art community in Nacogdoches has created an art student scholarship in his name---what a powerful and long lasting legacy.

Frields always loved the water and maybe that was due to his California beach days. His studios were always near the water—he appreciated place and spirit. I'm glad he got to design and live in his dream home and studio on the lake.

He was a paradox—an aggressive Baylor football player or a friend who could create and teach with love and sensitivity. He was a person who could entertain huge crowds and seemed to enjoy it, yet there was a bit of hermit in him who loved his solitary time alone.



O. Rufus Lovett

We who own some of his artwork know that Frields will always live within us. Anyone who makes or appreciates his work understands this. That is the beauty of art. He and his spirit will always be with us through his imagery. One cannot help but smile as we see Mr. Peanut or Frankenstein conversing with various characters or look at his hieroglyphic-like writing bordering his work.

I cannot hear the song “Werewolves of London” and not remember the night he was dressed up as a werewolf in a tux dancing to that tune then delivering a lecture covered in hair. He was a wonderful and creative filmmaker. Let’s face it...he could do just about anything. He made us smile and laugh. He made us think. He challenged us all to be better through art and knew of its healing powers.

I am so glad he found Tamara to be in his life. Carolyn and I were blessed to spend time with you both. Tamara is a great artist, friend and caregiver. Thank you for taking good care of our friend Frields—that could not have always been easy...I know that he made you dress up like a French maid on many occasions and called you pet names that I cannot mention here. You did your patient best and we all love you for it.

Now Frields is off on another adventure---I’m sure he is making someone laugh somewhere. In all those Church of Christ Sunday school lessons, heaven is described in terms of streets of gold and mansions with many rooms. I think that is so we as humans can understand, in some figurative way, that is will be a wonderful experience. I believe heaven will be a chance to eternally do what we loved here on earth without pain and things like cancer. I know Frields did not care about gold or mansions otherwise he would not have become an artist or teacher. I am hoping there will be endless art materials within his grasp and colors that he has never seen in this life. I hope there will be plenty of monkeys, dogs, werewolves and other things to inspire his new works. He will be able to get Elvis to pose in person and bet that he might see Mr. Peanut conversing with Jesus. Frields thanks for sharing a little bit of heaven here with all of us here. I miss you my friend.



## On Gary, Elvis, werewolves, monkeys & more...

*-Ron King*

"As I sit down to write about the passing of our dear friend Gary Fields, I find the words come forth very easily. It's easy to write about someone who was unlike any other person I ever met in my life.

In this life if we can truly count one's real friends on one hand, then many of us are most certainly "one-down" with the passing of Gary Fields. His physical loss is one that will leave a hole in those of us close to him for a long, long time to come. When I think of what he has taught to each of us with his friendship, it makes me realize how important it is in life to recognize those precious few individuals we meet who are unlike anyone else.

Besides being the most creative, energetic and amazing thinkers I've ever met, Gary had a trait that is a precious and rare commodity: True loyalty as a friend. To those of us that he called friends, Gary gave to us 100% dedication. We've not only lost a great artist and warm friend; we have lost someone who would stand shoulder-to-shoulder with you throughout any adversity one might face. When faced with his own ultimate adversity, Gary faced it with humor, bravery and a spirit that humbles those of us that witnessed it. To the last few days the smiles, the humor and the love were present in the same abundance that Gary always bestowed upon those of us close to him. When Gary chose to love you, it was with a dedication and depth that was truly humbling. He delivered all of this to you in a humorous package that refused to be taken heavy-handed, for no one could compete with his wit and quick-draw style of "humor of the absurd" in art and the real world. Who else could create a pastiche of Elvis, werewolves, UFOs, "Mr. Peanut" and monkeys (always the monkeys!), and leave you in stitches every single time with such an apparent

disarray of goofy characters? Like the great artists Salvador Dali and Marcel Duchamp, Gary Fields didn't make art: He WAS art. Gary Fields IS ART. He is the only artist I personally have known to embrace this philosophy all the way. Gary's entire life was, is and will continue to be a work of art. I see fellow artists smiling right now at this statement. They know exactly what I'm talking about.

As my wife, Julie just reminded me, "Gary's legacy is through the students... not through his own personal agenda". "*I've got the greatest job in the world!*" is a quote we remember fondly. He was the ultimate champion to the young art student. It is no doubt that our art students will suffer this loss the most from this loss, as I never had a mentor so rooted to the students and their personal and professional challenges. Not a single person would disagree that Gary Fields wasn't the ultimate champion for the student and student causes. He was the greatest teacher of art that I ever met. On a personal note, and in all sincerity, without Gary Fields it is unlikely I would have completed my own degree in the field of art. To those of us who took art instruction from him, we can never see a work in progress the same way again. I find myself asking, "what would ol' Gary do" many times when I run into a roadblock while working. I personally witnessed Gary take art students and turn them into life-long, dedicated artists. The list of these individuals is long and varied. Gary was the only art professor I've known that could relate to any and all styles...he didn't support some of it; he supported ALL of it. As Julie King says, "Sometimes you meet someone who is a good teacher, but not so great an artist...other times you meet someone who is a great artist, but not such a great teacher....Gary was solidly both".

It is a touching honor to write about and remember Gary. Gary Fields sets for all of us an example of what we can only hope to accomplish in our lives; for if we each support a good friend along life's journey the way Gary Fields did, then the world would certainly be a richer and happier place to be. I write these thoughts on behalf of all of us who loved Gary so dearly, and it's to his wife Tamara that we give thanks for the love, affection, devotion and care she gave to Gary. The fact that Gary chose her for his best friend and wife, should give you an indication of the sorts of qualities she possesses.

Gary is the only person I've ever known to actually know more about werewolf movies than me. Gary is the only man I've known to have personally sculpted a ceiling-high, bronze statue of Elvis Presley. Only Gary could get scores of people to believe a tale about frozen monkeys coming back to life and running rampant thru his house. I'm going to miss all the things that made you so eager to talk to Gary...so you could laugh and feel so good about life...I'll never forget someone with such a unique slant on living. My heart is sore, but now I'm smiling...I can't help it...that's Gary.



Elvis has left  
the building...  
and he's taken  
Gary and all  
of his  
monkeys with  
him."

-Ron King

# The first time I met Gary Frields

I was a freshman student registered for his 2D design class.

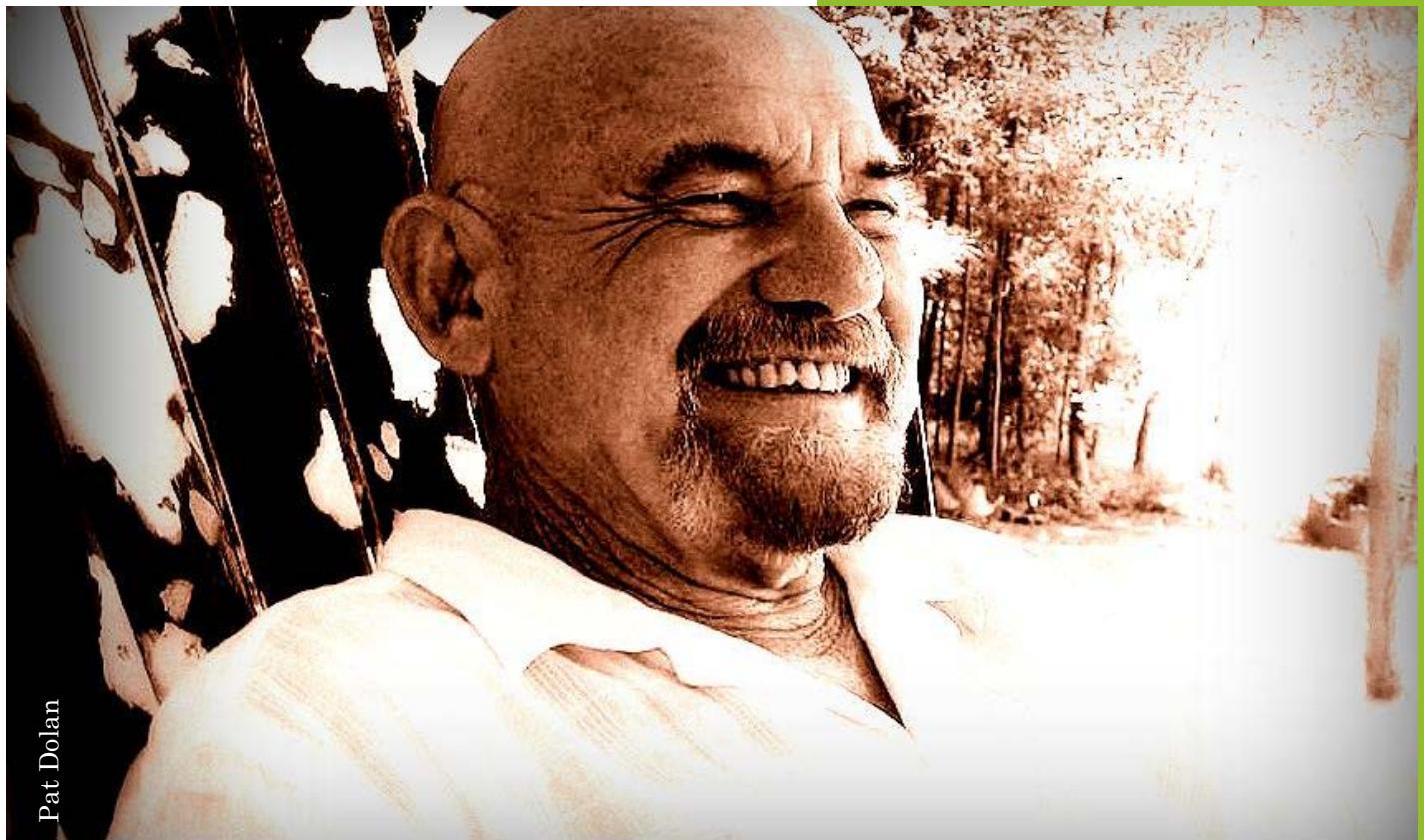
I remember walking in and being whistled -at by a monkey hanging on the door. There was an older guy setting amongst the other students; he started talking badly about the teacher, telling us all the bad stuff he had heard about him. When class started this same man stood up and introduced his self as Gary Frields.

This automatically put all of my nervous feelings that I had as a new student to rest. Gary had a one- of –a- kind sense of humor and reached his students in a way I have never seen before. Gary had a rare quality of being a genuine person. As I went through the program and studied with Gary more closely, he really helped me follow my path in art towards my own personal aesthetic. I remember several conversations with Gary which would always end in me being up- lifted. I owe my confidence in myself and art to Gary Frields. I wouldn't be where I am today if our paths had not crossed. Gary's passion for teaching, his loyalty to his students, and his dedication to art inspired me to become a teacher. If I can give back half of what Gary gave me, I feel like the world would be a better place.

Not only was Gary my teacher and mentor, but also a close dear friend who I loved deeply. Some of my fondest memories are sitting with Gary and Tamara on their dock feeding the catfish and watching the sunset on the lake. The sun will never set on Gary Frields. His spirit will live on in all of the lives he touched..

- *Shaun Roberts*





## words from Gary

### The charmed life of The Beautiful Gary Q. Frields

began March 12, 1946 in Waco, Texas.

The middle son of beloved parents Andy and Adine Frields, I grew up playing along the banks of the Brazos River. My brothers Ed, Roger and I shared in many adventures: fishing for snapping turtles, walking the railroad tracks, playing ball, thrashing pecan trees, riding in rodeos, and raising animals. In reality, our life mirrored the too perfect *Saturday Evening Post* covers of the '50s & '60s by Norman Rockwell.

At Nalley Elementary, thanks to my open-minded teachers, I launched my love of Art by creating drawings to accompany every assignment including History, Math, and English homework. I developed a passion for athletic competition, and at University Jr. High in Waco, I captained the football team and was recognized as an All-city player in 1961. My University High School teenage years were marked by meeting many of the best people I encountered on this planet and inexplicably being elected class favorite, class president, football co-captain, named to all-district and Super Cen-Tx teams and I emerged as an impassioned, but second-rate Artist. After watching Baylor football games from age 10 on, I saw me in my mind's eye as a Baylor Bear running out of the tunnel onto the football field. It happened, and in the first home game covering the opening kick-off, I made an explosive tackle. Perfect, but I was dazed by the impact and ran to the wrong sideline. Some would say I seemed somewhat dazed throughout my life, but I earned my Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from Baylor in 1969.

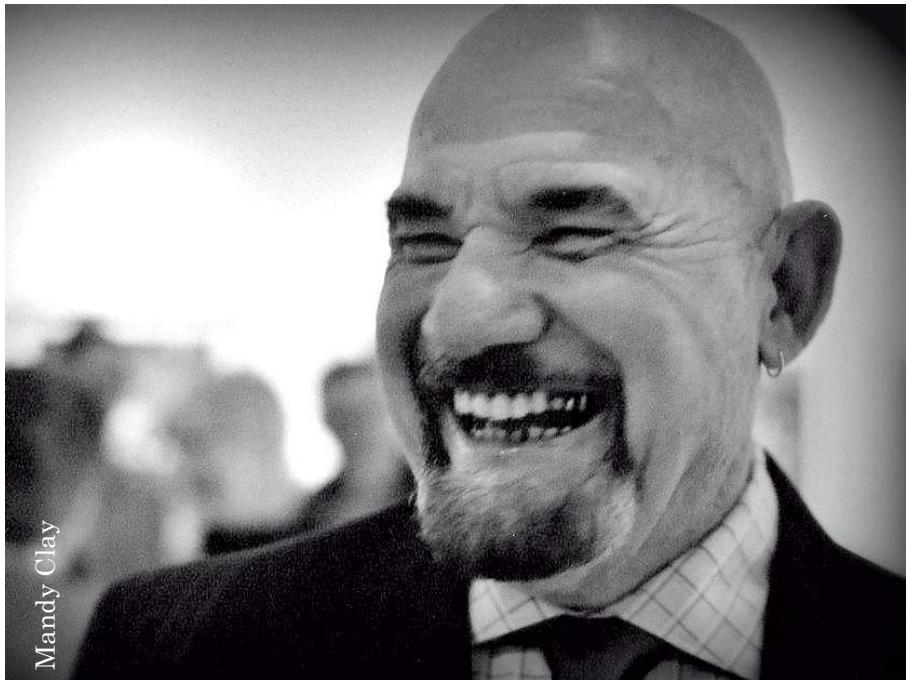
# Graduating at the height of the Vietnam

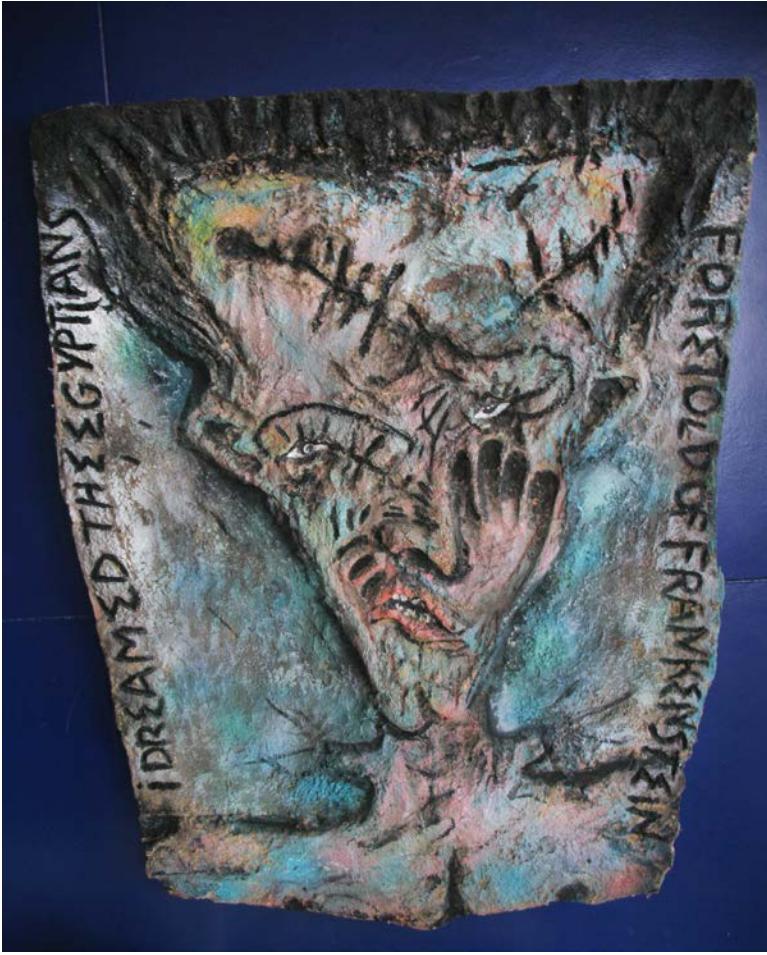
**War,** I was invited by the US Air Force to join them for training as a Motion Picture Specialist in Denver, Colorado. Being recognized at graduation as The Outstanding Honor Graduate of Lowery AFB made me

question the military's overall competence. At that point, I was deployed to a large motion picture complex at Norton AFB in southern California. I worked with a mix of civilians and military personnel, as well as some TV and sports celebrities of the early '70s. At the motion picture facility I met my commanding officer, Lt. Ron Rand, who had just graduated from the Air Force Academy. Sharing a common zeal for athletic competition, we became close friends, uniting as a team in USAF Racquetball Tournaments. I credit our joint efforts on the USAF racketball courts to ending the Vietnam war. Ron had an exemplary impact on me, expanded my world view and modeled a personal code of conduct that I admired—he was not easily impressed with himself (but that's something I could not master). I did enjoy the California beach/Hippy lifestyle that embraced freedom, love, peace and eclectic music. Following my Air Force duty, I headed back to Texas in quest of graduate Art study in a less populated part of the planet.

In 1973 I found Nacogdoches and Stephen F. Austin State University, School of Art. How fortunate! At SFA I met my mentor, John Daniel, an approachable Art sage and a trusted friend who helped me push my second-rate artistic abilities to the periphery of a self-proclaimed genius status. Encountering fellow students Joe Brown and Marc Newquist in 1974 made this a utopian time and place for me, alive with Artistic Halloween and Christmas Happenings and other Sacoroaches (Marc & Joe's underground Art studio hangout) merriment. It was inspiring to be in the company of kindred, inventive spirits that were exceptional humans, and fair-minded about having a werewolf for a friend. We have remained life-long friends and they are a part of Nacogdoches lore.

After receiving my MA and MFA in drawing and sculpture, I was hired as the Chairman of the Art Department at Kilgore College in 1978. During my eight years at KC I worked with many talented, dedicated students and developed three enduring friendships with consummate teachers Raymond Caldwell, O. Rufus Lovett and Mike Donahue. Michael D was the chair of Temple College and a fellow graduate student from SFA. We exchanged ideas and opinions about setting up our programs, traveled Europe together, and he is a most phenomenal human being and friend.





# Returning in 1986 to teach at SFA and live in Nacogdoches was a dream come true.

As I have stated, I had a charmed life and a version of all that I dreamed of has come true, but my happiness on this planet has depended a good deal on family, friends, students making art, and UFO rides.

I am taking this time as s a last chance to explain myself. Many of us were close at some place in time, but as life happened it took us on different trails, but you were always in my mind even though I was not good at staving in touch. In cultivating

friendships, understanding friends adjusted to my neglect of regular tending and excessive fertilizing; I harvested an abundance of generosity, kindness, and tolerance of my idiosyncratic personality. I have replayed many times the movie in my mind of us laughing, playing, and talking. Our rapport of friendship, love, and laughter made life magical never mundane, ordinary or unpoetic.

Three years ago I married someone just like me—young, intelligent, beautiful and talented. Actually, there was a large group of people that thought Tamara Robertson had made an insane choice marrying someone substantially her senior. There was a considerably smaller group of intelligent, broad-minded people who believed that love is unpredictable and Tamara was only following her heart. I agree strongly with the first group who thought it was an insane choice.

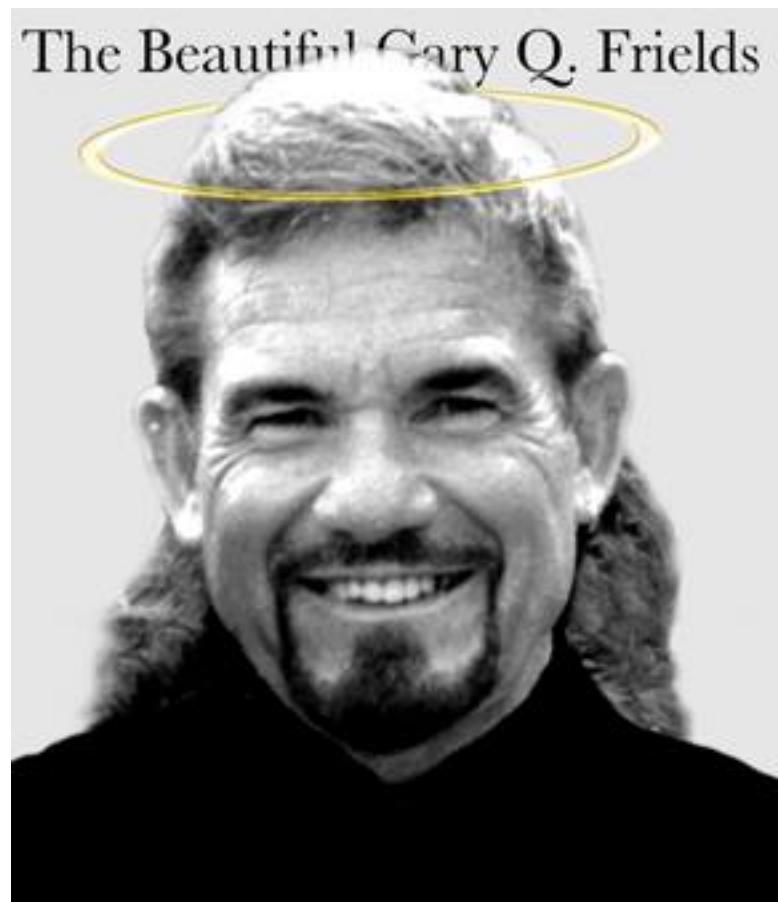
Tamara, as my wife and dearest friend, has been caring, loving, considerate, unselfish, attentive, compassionate and understanding. As well as gorgeous—like a super model. She has a spellbinding beauty with an inner being that is pure, devoted, tender and warm, yet lionhearted and unflinching when facing my cancer. Being an eccentric, self-proclaimed genius and by public acclamation a moron, I am most fortunate to have found someone that is beyond compare as a true devotee and President of The Beautiful Gary Q. Frieds Fan Club.

Our home was full of laughter because of her always cheerful mood, operatic singing, witty mockery and monkey shines. Although we only had three years together, it would seem ungrateful to question the briefness. A living soul is privileged to ever experience the love and fun that we found in each other's company.

Tamara, your Love made my Life feel complete - I Love you so.

*My life on this  
planet ended  
August 24, 2013  
-TBGQF*

I would  
be grateful for  
your presence  
at *My Last  
Presentation*



a premiere showing of *The Beautiful Gary Q. Frields Memorial*, at the Pines Theater, 113 South 1st Street, Lufkin, TX; August 30, 2013 at 6 p.m. Free admission. Very likely this event is being nationally televised with this day designated as a postal and banking holiday.

A last chance for me to explain myself through a visual production, this review of my life has the feel of watching a farcical, far-fetched, bitter-sweet *Adventure*, full of monkey business, thrills and bliss.

This memorial will not follow funeral tradition. It is in harmony with the philosophy I lived and taught. That is, strive to have a creative, imaginative and original life. Avoid self-imposed limitations such as conventional, habitual thinking—or doing something because it is what everyone else does (e.g. houses, funerals).

*\*Not that my line of thought is a higher-grade of thinking, just an alternative that allows for more individual expression of one's persona or spirit.*