

## James Yale – NWA Artist

By: Don Barnett, Editor

James Yale, a self-taught artist, was born January 31, 1947 in the small rural farm town of Jasper, Missouri. His grandfather was a Phillips, which would tie into the Phillips Petroleum company, but they were just really humble regular people in Missouri. His grandfather and grandmother were a major influence in his early life and helped shape the man James became. James' grandfather worked at the bicycle shop of the Wright Brothers when they were creating the first airplane. This level of creativity and imagination was the influence James needed to enhance his own level of creativity.

As a young child James began to express an interest and ability in writing, drawing, and painting between the early age of three to six years old with his grandmother – Francis Phillips. "My grandmother had an amazing collection of books with engravings, wonderful illustrations. She was my first teacher; she taught me to paint and draw. She was active in the Eastern Star, so I had an introduction to mysticism early in my life."

Yale had little opportunities to be introduced to formalism in art during his years in rural public schools. Nature was his art school, he preferred "...arts, writing and fishing, and was basically lost in my own little universe". He always took a sketch book when he fished.

"There weren't a lot of opportunities to study art, but drafting was pretty close to art. I loved geometry and physics, so architecture and engineering were good for me." He passed the Missouri architecture exam in high school.

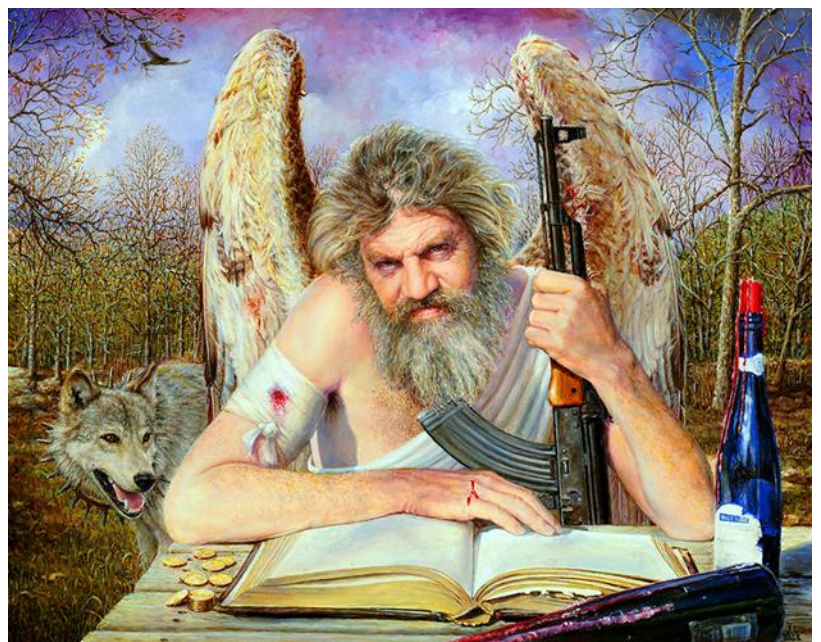
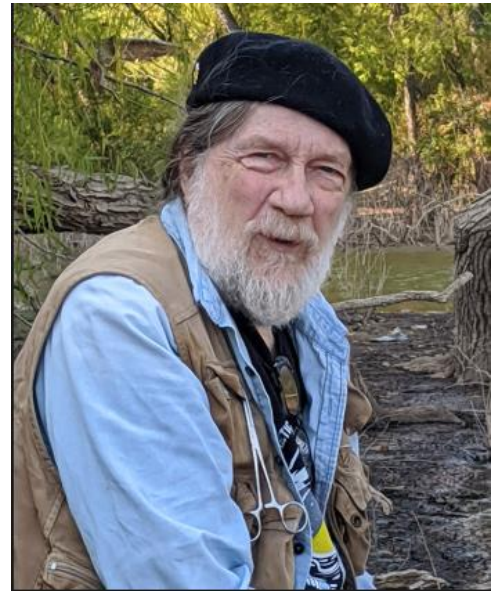
He poured over books, and when possible, went to galleries and museums within a 500 mile radius. Standing inches away from the works - some created centuries earlier - he examined the brush strokes, the thickness of the paint, and all of the details not visible in a book or a print. Then he practiced creating pieces with his own style.

Yale said that he learned his craft in museums and galleries.

"I studied art whenever and wherever I could. I'd take out a magnifying glass to try and figure out how these painters did their work. Sometimes, I'd get shooed away by the guards, sometimes I wouldn't."

Yale recalls being moved to tears when he saw a Vincent Van Gogh painting of the artist's bed and studio. "I was six inches away from it, magnifying glass in hand. The emotion, the energy was incredible." American illustrator and painter Maxfield Parrish and 19th century French artist William Bouguereau were important influences.

Yale apprenticed with several professional teaching artists at a young age. He felt fortunate with this early exposure of apprenticing that taught him many aspects of the art world that could never be obtained from a formal education.

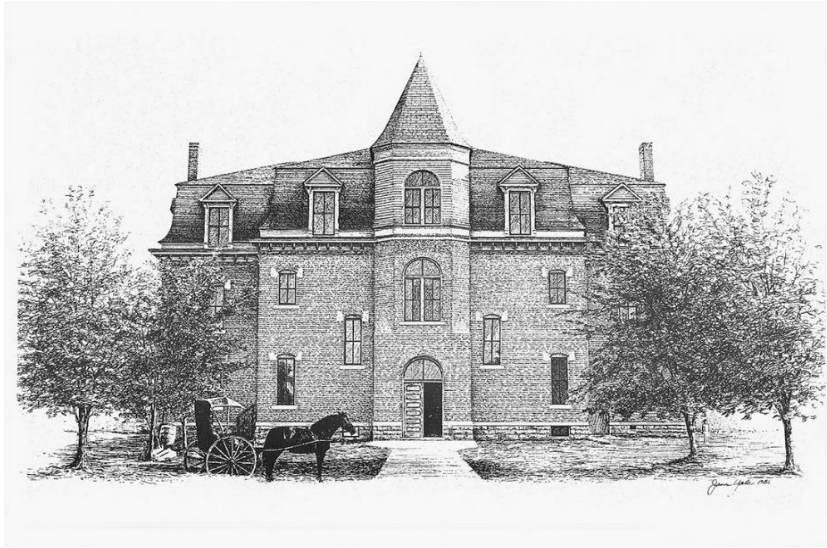


Fallen Angel of War and Peace

## The Benton County Pioneer

One of his professors, Arthur Boles, who retired from the Art Institute of Chicago, befriended Yale and took him and other students on as apprentices. As part of that, they helped around the house designed by Arthur's friend Frank Lloyd Wright. "I learned more from him in just visits while pulling weeds and planting roses than I did in his classes." Boles told stories about philosophy, ambition, and creative force, describing how to focus the imagination. Boles, who also did etchings for Pablo Picasso, sent Picasso samples of Yale's work. And Picasso invited Yale to visit him. Picasso also wrote back, "First you must learn to break the rules of your craft and master them...if you don't use your imagination, take chances, experiment and promote yourself...you will just become a human camera. If I had just painted portraits...no one would have known my name today."

At 22 years old Yale moved to Houston and worked for an engineering firm that did contract work for NASA. The last project he did for Ray Geophysical was a digital solar-powered seismograph that went to the moon on the Apollo II Mission. He watched the trip from Mission control at NASA. His interest in science is reflected in his cosmic realism paintings.



## Old Bentonville Academy

His multi-dimensional talents continued to produce a large volume and variety of paintings, sculpture, writings and designs for inventions.

Yale was a romanticist, a dreamer, a futurist, verging on the metaphysical in the depiction of limitless space in which his symbolic figures move. This is true whether the work was executed as a painting, drawing, or sculpture. As an artist working in diverse media, he was intent on achieving an inner reality that communicates visual overtones of the surreal, metaphysical nature of existentialism, where he questioned life's values and the complexities of the universe.

"I produce work without explaining it. I want people who see my work to use their own dreams and imaginations to invent their own stories from what they see."

Live models were used in most of James' paintings. He captures the light and energy of the human form with masterful works that combine nature and all of its mysteries in a timeless fashion. It's the dual reality of creating illusions of both the seen and unseen worlds that stimulate our emotions and stir our dreams. One of his favorite works is titled "**Fallen Angel of War and Peace**".

Yale has owned and operated studios and galleries in Missouri, Texas, and Arkansas. At the same time, he traveled across the country sketching and painting portraits and receiving commissions for over 50 years. He has illustrated newspapers, magazines, books, music albums and CD cover art. James also worked in advertising, producing print media, videos and television commercials. Yale won many awards across the country in both commercial and fine art.

Yale's life is Ozark history. He has done portraits for corporations and individuals. Yale's Client List includes: Sam and Helen Walton- Founders of Walmart, Don Tyson- Tyson Foods, Doreen Virtue- Author / Hay House Publishing USA and UK. His more famous subjects include Sam and Helen Walton, Bill Clinton, Willie Nelson, E. Fay Jones, Doctor Benjamin Spock, and countless others around the world.

## The James Yale Legacy Project

Due to his Multiple Sclerosis (MS), James was out of the public eye due to MS for over 16 years. After his passing on August 18, 2023, James' wife of sixteen years, Charlotte Buchanan Yale and his daughter Allison Monet Yale have formed the James Yale Legacy Project that rediscovers the lost art of James Yale and the stories behind the art and the man.

Throughout his career, Yale produced and sold a remarkable body of works. He created literally hundreds of works that were sold through galleries that never kept records of their sales or who they were sold to. Many of James' paintings are overseas. **The James Yale Legacy Project** is dedicated to honor and preserve the full scope of James contributions as we create a comprehensive catalog of his artworks, and invite the public to share their James Yale art and stories behind the art and the man through <https://jamesyale.com/>. This archive will serve not only as a lasting record of his creative vision, but also a valuable resource for future generations. For more information about his work, please visit his web site - <https://jamesyale.com/>.

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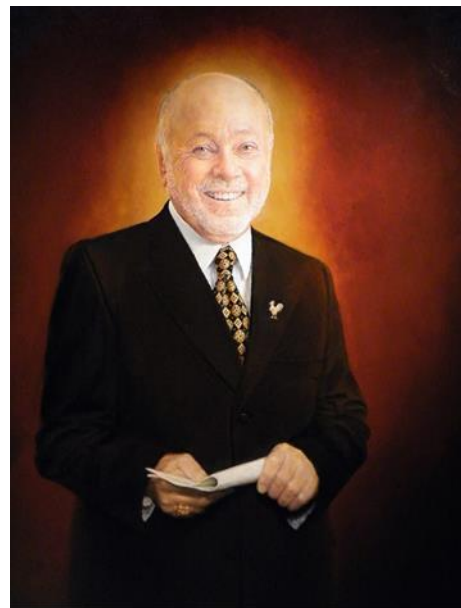
**Sources:**

- Interview with Charlotte Buchanan-Yale on 03/16/2026
- [HTTPS://JAMESYALE.COM/](https://jamesyale.com/)

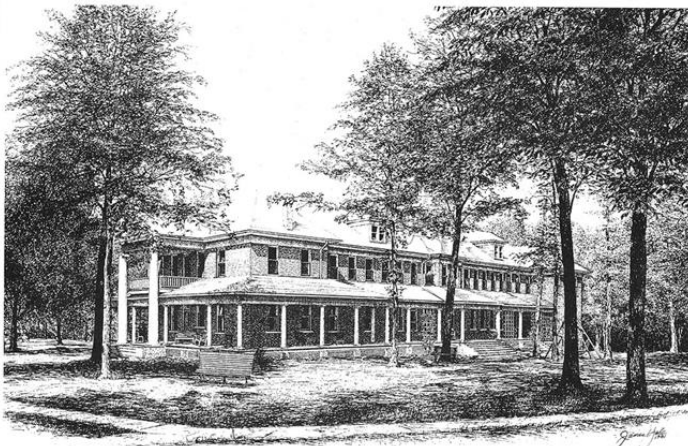
**Samples of Art from James Yale**



Sam Walton



Don Tyson



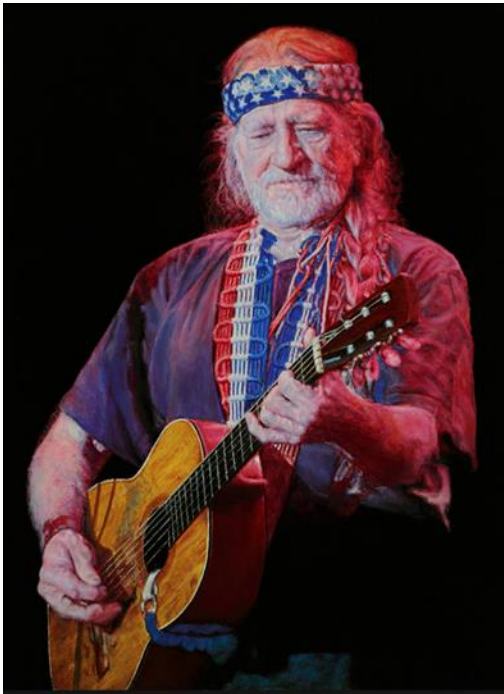
Park Springs Hotel



Hotel Massey



Bentonville Square



Willie Nelson



The People's Bank