

Like many other young girls, Julie Olsen had a profound love of horses while growing up in Oregon and dreamed of owning one. As the years went on, that dream changed into dreams of being married, which became the real blessing with two wonderful children: first a delightful boy and ten years later, an adorable baby girl. Many beautiful photos captured the sweetness of those endearing times, treasures of Julie's heart.

It was during those young years that Julie found work in decorating cakes. This was the beginning of her creative perfectionism in the art of a job well done. But as those years passed along, her love of animals, especially the majestic movement of horses, never diminished.

Meeting Bill Corwin opened new doors for Julie. She told him that one of her greatest desires was to paint portraits. He introduced her to his wife, Phyllis, a well-known art instructor and award-winning artist in Washougal, Washington; coincidentally in the same town that Julie has called home for many years.

Phyllis subtly taught Julie how to paint portraits ranging from the treasured photos of her children's sweet faces to some First Nation portraits. She was instrumental in bringing Julie's love of horses to life, using pastels and oils on canvas.

Julie spends hours in building up the layers of pastels to create the contrast of colors on the canvas. It is that layering that procures the stunningly realistic touch of excellence, focusing on the detailed look of the subject's eyes. The "eye-catching" feature is the key to bringing the completed art project to life.

As a budding artist, Julie entered three of her artworks at the Clark County Fair for the first time and was honored with a total of six award-winning ribbons, including "People's Choice" and "Best in Show". She was amazed at the accolades, even Rich Rubin, the Assistant Superintendent in Fine Arts, was awed by the results. He exclaimed to her that "This has never happened before! No first-timer has ever won that many ribbons!"

Julie's first pieces brought her recognition as she continued to display them, along with new artworks, in local and regional shows and exhibits. Since then, she has been honored with many other achievement awards.

Julie enjoys and values art exhibitions as a venue to share her love and passion for art with others. This is particularly true when those who share their personal interpretation of the feel and uniqueness of what her art means to them. Some of Julie's artworks have become prized possessions in people's homes and hearts.