

This homage painting was done in about 2013-14. The painting was a Finalist in one of the Texas Art Prize Hunting Shows. It was all about my older brother Ted and some of his early favorite and happiest times.

We spent many sweet years as campers and later as staff members at the old scout camp Tom Wooten on Bull Creek just outside Austin at that time. It was later moved to near Bastrop State Park. Some of our best times were spent at the old swimming pool by the creek. It was little beat up and crooked and leaky even way back then. We never noticed.

The lifeguards were our heroes. Later Ted became Head Lifeguard during summers off and between semesters at Sam Houston State College where he studied Printing Management. He was sort'a small and ordinary until he went off to school. I guess he worked out and lifted weights while in school. He came back a muscle man with quite the physique. This was necessary and most appropriate for the Camp Head Life Guard position.

Many stories emerged about Ted who was well liked by all and was indeed fearless. (Maybe reckless might be a better description). "Rat's" exploits were reported far and wide and way too often and with too much detail. Some too risqué to write down. None the less he became the camp "Hero" as that pool position almost always guarantees.

I bet those wonderful summer days and nights were his favorite early times. He was also a leader in The Tonkawa Order Of The Arrow Lodge #99. Ted really did the Lodge hard work while I was off "indian dancing". We both loved the OA and were honored with the highest rank of Vigil. Our younger brothers, David and John, followed later and became members of the Lodge and indian dancers, too! Sadly, Ted had a rare form of cancer that finally did him in. He held on for extra years way past all odds. He loved his nickname "Rat"! (Aha! Yet another untold story)

I like a challenge, so I did the oil and acrylic painting on unprimed canvas. The actual pool water area was painted and airbrushed over a gesso primed shape with oil paints and varnishes. I loved painting images of the moon and this one is pristine. It is very detailed and glows. "After" images will appear if you stare at it and then look at another dark, deep part of the pool. We dearly loved hanging out by that old pool late at night. Many a plan was made as we sat about the pool and the creek and stared into the night and sometimes the dawn, too.

In this painting I am seeing the old pool as finally closed down and emptying out at the end of the last summer. Ted's diving board is broken and washed far away to the shallow end. The walkways and pool walls are broken, scarred and cracked. The actual moon probably did not come out the night of this imagined vigil. However, the moon is reflected, still, in that old pool by that old creek in that old camp... in my mind.



Vigil For The Old Lifeguard.

72x48 inches. • 2014. • Oil and acrylic on canvas. • Made in Piland's SS Studio. • Exhibited in the Hunting Show. • Stored in Page Piland home or storage in Bellaire, Texas in 2021. • Piland Biography/ C.R. - 29 Stories discusses the works in detail. • See photo of the work in that book written by the artist, Page Newton Piland, in Bellaire, Texas. 2021. • Signed by the artist on the back of canvas and the stretcher bars.