

James Gibson

Florida Highwaymen Artist

Gibson, who was born January 1, 1938, in Fort Pierce, Florida, attended the local Catholic school for blacks (where his father was the custodian). He is the fourth generation of his family to have been born in Florida. The eldest of eight children, he later attended Lincoln Park Academy. When Zora Neale Hurston, a teacher there, died, Gibson was selected to be one of the pallbearers at her funeral. After graduation from Lincoln Park, he went to Tennessee State University to study biology, but moved back home when his money ran out.

Gibson was one of Alfred Hair's best friends and was inspired by Hair and some friendly competition to start painting and selling. He is one of the five original Highwaymen.

Charming and always well-dressed, Gibson now counts among his collectors Gladys Knight and Steven Spielberg, who used one of his paintings in his 2002 movie *Catch Me If You Can*. One of his paintings hangs in the White House. He forged a friendship with the former Florida governor Jeb Bush and his wife, Columba, and was commissioned to create several paintings for the Florida Governor's Mansion. Today, he has a long list of commissions for his paintings. He has received numerous awards for his work within the state's school system. Gibson is listed as one of the state's famous African-Americans. His longtime companion is Estelle Dunn, and he has three children.

