

Mary Ann Carroll

Florida Highwaymen Artist

Mary Ann Carroll is the sole woman in the group of artists known as the "Florida Highwaymen." Born in 1940, into a family of sharecroppers, her family moved to Fort Pierce, Florida when she was eight. There, Mary Ann had an opportunity to watch Harold Newton paint. Inspired by Harold's work, she joined the ragtag bunch of artists early on, bringing a gifted way of looking at color to the group. First Mary Ann Carroll Paintings were sold when she was of the age of 18, and when she often traveled alone, throughout the state, to sell her work; always carrying a small gun to protect herself. Fearless, she even sold paintings in Okeechobee where "the guys" refused to go because of a greater sense of racial tension. Motivated by the necessity of supporting seven children after her husband abandoned their family when the youngest was just five, she painted in part to supplement her income from house cleaning.

Many of Mary Ann Carroll paintings are painted in usual manner for Highwaymen artists – on Upson board, with crown molding as a frame. She is one of the few Highwaymen that learned to mix colors to enhance details early on. She still uses a kitchen spoon to mix oils – a Highwaymen trademark. Many of her paintings are sized 24 x 36, because she painted about two a day, that size. She also sold smaller works including 18 x 24 and 12 x 24 sizes. Now in her 60's she still paints, often to fill commission requests.

Mary Ann Carroll paintings are filled with crisp details, vibrant colors and the sense of the peace and harmony she feels while creating each one. Even shadowed areas in her paintings are crafted by darkening other colors in the work, and yet they seem to teem with life. Her Florida landscapes exemplify the wild energy of undeveloped Florida and create a sense of timelessness in each pictorial history that viewers want to escape to again and again. Despite the fact that she painted a great number of works during her career, her paintings are not very often offered for sale.

