

\$75.00 U.S.

# THE ART AND LIFE OF JIMMIE JONES

LANDSCAPE ARTIST OF THE CANYON COUNTRY

This beautiful book showcases the fabulous artwork of renowned Utah landscape artist Jimmie Jones. It also delves into his history, motivation, education, and growth as an artist. Author James M. Aton, through his meticulous research and writing, weaves an interesting and in-depth narrative of Jones' life, accented with archival photographs, to accompany a detailed description of numerous paintings.

The art presented in this book begins from Jones' childhood, crayon colorings saved by his mother, through his figure and portrait period, including works from the twelve winters Jones lived in San Blas, Mexico, to images from the years he spent painting various views of the Grand Canyon, Zion National Park, and the other exquisite canyons of southern Utah. No artistic period in Jones' life is left unexplored or undocumented.

Jones' dying wish was to leave a legacy of inspiration for future artists. He donated many of his best works to Southern Utah University, his hometown college, along with his finely crafted home to help fund the creation of a fine arts museum. The artwork displayed there, his and that of many other artists, will serve to feed the dreams of young painters, sketchers, and sculptors for generations to come. *The Art and Life of Jimmie Jones* is a valued addition to any art lover's book collection and will provide inspiration and motivation for any artist, no matter what level or ability.

James M. Aton

# THE ART AND LIFE OF JIMMIE JONES

LANDSCAPE ARTIST OF THE CANYON COUNTRY

# THE ART AND LIFE OF JIMMIE JONES

Aton



Art / Biography



9 781423 624585

James M. Aton was born in Louisville, Kentucky, in 1949, and was educated there in Catholic schools. He received a BA in English from Spring Hill College in Mobile, Alabama, in 1971, an MA in English from the University of Kentucky in 1977, and a PhD in American Literature from Ohio University in 1981. He has taught in the Department of English at Southern Utah University since 1980, where he is a Professor of English. He was named SUU Distinguished Educator in 1994, Outstanding Scholar in 2010, and Trustees Award of Excellence in 2011.

Aton has twice been a Visiting Fulbright Scholar in American Studies, first in 1989–90 at Gadjah Mada University in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, and second in 1997–98 at Sichuan University in Chengdu, Peoples Republic of China. His monograph, *John Wesley Powell*, appeared as part of Boise State University's Western Writers Series. His book with Robert S. McPherson, *River Flowing from the Sunrise: An Environmental History of the Lower San Juan* (Logan 2000), was awarded the 2000 Norris and Carol Hundley Award for "best book on any historical subject" from the Pacific Coast Branch of the American Historical Association. His book with photographer Dan Miller, *The River Knows Everything: Desolation Canyon and the Green* (Logan 2009) was a finalist for the 2009 Utah Book Award in nonfiction. *John Wesley Powell: His Life and Legacy* (Salt Lake City) was published in 2010. In 2013 Southern Utah University Press released his book *Jim Jones: The San Blas Years*.

Aton is an avid river runner, skier, hiker, and backpacker. He is married and has a daughter.

FRONT COVER *Waterfall at the Temple of Sineavava* (detail), 2009, oil on canvas, 70 x 50, collection of Southern Utah University

BACK COVER *Zion From Rockville Mountain* (detail), 1999, oil on canvas, 90 x 77, collection of Southern Utah University



# CONTENTS

- ACKNOWLEDGMENTS ..... 8
- INTRODUCTION..... 11
- TO L.A. AND BACK: 1933–1961 ..... 17
  - Cedar City
  - Los Angeles
  - Salt Lake City
- TO MEXICO AND BACK: 1961–1975..... 51
  - San Blas
  - Natasha
  - Paintings: San Blas and Beyond
  - More Trips with Tony
  - Other Friends, Other Paintings
  - Stephan, Inge, and Other Expats
- A STRANGE AND WONDERFUL COUNTRY: The Family Cabin, 1968–2009 ..... 101
  - Some paintings of Cedar Canyon completed between 1976 and 1988
  - Some paintings completed near the family cabin between 1975 and 2001
- TURN TO THE LAND: Year of Decision, 1977–1978 ..... 117
  - Some paintings from the 1978 Braithwaite Gallery Show
- HOME BUILDING AND PAINTING IN THE DREAM STUDIO, 1978–1988 ..... 135
- MAJOR PHASE, 1988–1993..... 165
- ASTRIDE HIS WORLD, 1993–2006..... 189
- SPRINTING TOWARD THE END, 2006–2009..... 219
  - Big Bend paintings
  - Other paintings from the last show
  - Last three commissions
- ENDNOTES ..... 246
- BIBLIOGRAPHY ..... 255
- INDEX ..... 259



CHAPTER 8

# SPRINTING TOWARD THE END, 2006–2009



“IT’S ALMOST NEVER TOO LATE TO GO OUT WITH SOME STYLE.”

—DWIGHT GARNER, *NEW YORK TIMES*

It is hard to know exactly when Jones, like Tolstoy’s Ivan Ilyich, “could see that he was dying” from emphysema.<sup>1</sup> A famously private person, Jones treated health issues like the CIA does spy information. Plus, the children of Elton Jones were expected to bounce out of bed, ignore their sore throats, and carry on. Jimmie Jones knew no other way. He would almost rather eat poison than

see a doctor. As he looked death in the face, he only knew he had paintings to paint and big things still to accomplish. And in the last three years of his life he would complete two of the biggest tasks of his life. One was his last show with fourteen of his very best paintings. Another was to start the ball rolling for one of the dreams of his life: a bona fide art museum in his hometown, Cedar City.

PLATE 8.13 *Snow on the Great White Throne*, 2009, oil on canvas, 52 x 42, collection of Southern Utah University

PLATE 8.3 *Autumn Cottonwood in Zion*, 2009, oil on canvas, 32 x 50, collection of Southern Utah University



PLATE 2.41 *Woman in Doorway*, 1969, oil on canvas, 40 x 32, collection of Barry and Cynthia Line



ABOVE: PLATE 5.17 *Spring Eagle Crags*, 1981, oil on canvas, 12 x 22, private collection

BELOW: PLATE 5.18 *West Face of Zion*, 1981, oil on canvas, 20 x 48, collection of Zion's Bank of Springdale

