

# Edward J. Fraughton Honored by WI

**By Vern Gorzitze Utah Westerners**

*"He grew up poor in a town built on silver-but his work in bronze made him a solid success" Lynn Anderson*

A new arrival came to the home of Clara Jane Ackerlund Fraughton and Ellis Joseph Fraughton, March 22, 1939, in Park City, Utah. The new born would be given the name Ed-ward James Fraughton with which he would proudly sign his creations from then on.

The formative years of his life were spent in Park City and surrounding area, he said:

*"...a wonderful place to grow up!...you could walk out back and be on the open mountain-side, a place to ramble around or sit on a rock and watch rabbits."*

The Marsac Elementary School fourth grade, in 1949, was the starting point of his future successful career. He was given a box of new, yet to be used, crayons as a prize for his rendering, on brown grocery store paper, of the Union Pacific Depot. Months later, at the end of that school year, during the final assembly, his name was announced as having won the Milton Bradley company's "American the Beautiful" national crayon contest. The art teacher, Mrs. Alene Gibbons, presented young Ed with an in-scribed plaque.

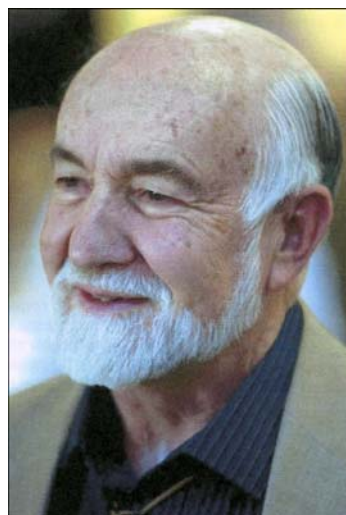
While growing up, Ed spent much of his time on local art projects as well as creating stories drawn from his imagination. His early subjects were of a western nature and of horses.

While Ed and his two sisters were very young, his mother and father divorced and a short time later his mother re-married, this time to a singer of ballads and a great story teller named Charles "Zip" Nelson. For a time the family lived at the upper end of Park Avenue in Park City, later moving to small quarters in Diamond Hollow.

*"There were four of us kids by then and there was a small room built off to the side where we all slept...Mom and Dad slept on a fold-out couch in the living room."*

Sometime later his mother was able to purchase a small house almost at the top of Empire Street. Ed spent the rest of his Park City years living in that house.

Ed always had a job to go to after school and summers, a paperboy, an assistant to the school caretaker, cleaning type fonts at the printers. Many summers were spent at the Bitner Ranch and winters at Snow Park, always finding time to sketch.



*Edward J. Fraughton*

Even though they were poor, Ed's mother Clara made sure her children learned the basics: courtesy mixed with independence and an interest in the arts. As soon as the kids were able to carry a tune they were playing instruments such as the trombone, baritone horn, and drums. Guess who played the drums? He was a member of a band called the "Melody Makers" but had to quit when his mother learned they might have to play in bars. In later years Ed played the baritone horn in the university concert and marching bands.

In 1957, after working a summer on the Bitner Ranch and earning \$300, he enrolled in the University of Utah School of Engineering, with tuition of \$275, Ed lived on \$30 a month for room and board his fresh-man

year while carrying as much as 22 hours.

Registering for a second year, he took a sculpting class-GOT HOOKED-and immediately changed his major. Married, with a family on the way, Ed earned his degree and entered graduate school. Not quite finishing his thesis he took a position with the Job Corps. Later, when he applied to finish his graduate degree, he was told his work did not show the maturity to fill the requirements.

*"Two years later I became a professional sculptor and two or three years after that I was winning national awards."*

His first real commission was in 1967 when he sculpted a bust for the LDS Church. In 1969 he completed a heroic 12-foot bronze of a Mormon Battalion soldier. This sculpture now stands at the highest point of San Francisco's Presidio Park. Many of his works depict men and animals struggling against nature and the elements. They show faces of strength and exhaustion.

Ed and his wife Ann live in an old LDS Church which was renovated to accommodate his private and business needs. The class rooms are now family rooms and the high arching chapel ceiling has easily, until recently, accepted his largest work. The basement

serves as and is the location of the foundry. Ed has been forced into larger quarters since his latest commission, giving him much needed space. This project is the "Pioneer Courage" monument, three and a half blocks long, in Omaha, Nebraska.

He flies an airplane and holds a patent for an anti-collision and tracking device more commonly known as ADS-B. This came about after a tragic air collision over the Salt Lake Valley in 1987 involving two air-craft and taking 10 lives. ADS-B has been announced as the FAA's system of choice to up-grade and replace the outdated radar based air traffic control technology. Ed restores Model A Fords, plays the piano, enjoys his computer, is a founding member of the National Academy of Western Art, is a member of the National Sculpture Society and holds membership in the well-known and respected San Francisco Bohemian Club. He is proud of his membership of over 30 years in **Utah Westerners**, joining in 1975, and holding several positions of leadership. He is responsible for creating a Utah Westerners belt buckle, bolo tie and a replica of "Old Joe" which appears on our name tags.

Ed is continually sketching on anything that is handy, be it a place mat, back of a program notice, a pinochle score pad or just an old envelope he might find in his

jacket pocket. A small selection of his sketches was included on the pages of Utah Westerners 30th Anniversary Booklet published in 1998.

A few of his accomplishments have already been mentioned. Others include but are not limited to a bust of John F. Kennedy in the JFK Memorial Library in Boston, Ronald Reagan Commemorative Medal, Out-standing Utah Artist award in 1979 and 1981, five time gold medal and one silver medal winner for sculpture from the AWA. All of the awards and accolades are cherished by Ed. But the most important thing to him is the respect of his peers.

[On a personal note, members of the **WI Home Ranch** can enjoy his work every day as he created the statue of John Wayne in the National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum, the location of our office.]

Fraughton shared his philosophy with a group gathered at the annual Ladies Night some time ago:

*"Teaching people to see the vision of the artist is important, great music, great literature-there's an emotional and spiritual level of communication that isn't described in words, and that's*