

For Immediate Release

Frank Day Historian and Legend Painter 26 August through 1 October, 2006

Frank Day was an excellent historian of the Maidu people and one of the most outstanding California Indian Artists to preserve his heritage through expressions of Maidu legends and history in his paintings. He was born in 1902 in Berry Creek, California, in the Sierra Nevada Mountains. Day received his formal education in public schools at Berry Creek, however; he found his own way to develop his talents as an artist.

Frank Day's knowledge of ancient Maidu history and mythology came from a close relationship with his father, Twoboe. Most of Twoboe's experience had taken place before the massive incursions of the settlers to the area: he tutored his son in the legends, history, technology and religion of his people. Thus it could be said that Frank Day's memory spans many generations of Maidu history, and from this excellent source came the themes of his paintings.

As a young man, Day was considered rich. His holdings included an Indian homestead with roundhouse, barns, sheds, and trees. After the death of his father in 1922, Day, followed an ancient custom, burned his estate to the ground. He then turned to the open road and did not return for a dozen years. In all his travels, Day went first to Native American People of the area learning their ways, traditions and histories. Day's Native name "Ly-dam-lilly" meaning "Fading-Morning-Star," came to him in a vision which he called a "spiritual manifestation." While still in his twenties he taught painting to farmers at the Shield of Faith School in Texas.

Day had an interest in painting since his youth, however: it was not until he was recovering from a serious automobile accident in 1960 that he concentrated fully on his painting as a career. Through encouragement by his wife, Florence; Day turned his talents away from painting conventional subjects toward recording tribal histories and legends, which pertained to the Maidu people. As a result of his extensive knowledge of tribal lore and legends his bold and daring compositions are filled with accurate details interpreting a way of life long since past.

In the last years of his life, 1973—1975, Frank Day found a public forum for his art and story telling at Pacific Western Traders in Folsom, CA. Here, Day told his stories and sang the song associated with his painting to those who would listen.

Day had been teaching others, mostly non-Indians, about his culture through his paintings and occasional appearances in anthropology classes for over a decade, at Pacific Western Traders he finally had a chance to step into the role of teacher to a new generation of California Indians. In 1973, with the support of Pacific Western Traders, Day began teaching Maidu song and dance to a group of California Indians and others who wished to learn. Today, the Maidu Dancers and Traditionalists continue to perform the dances he taught them and are his living legacy.

Through his association with Pacific Western Traders, Frank Day met and became an inspiration to younger California Indian visual artists. As one of the first California Indian artists to represent the heritage of his people, he affirmed the effort of younger artists in their celebration and renewal of Native American cultural traditions. Day's legacy and influence did not end with his death in 1976, however. Three contemporary artist of Maidu descent have been influenced by Day's art and his example of self-expression: Dalbert Castro, Harry Fonseca and Judith Lowry, two of whom are represented by Pacific Western Traders.

One of Day's crowning art achievements was his participation as a featured artist and elder in the; *I Am These People* exhibit of Native American art in Gov. Jerry Brown's office in 1975. Day had painted over 200 works, eventually these works have traveled to exhibitions all over the world including: The Museum of the Native American in New York City, a Smithsonian, The Oakland Museum, Oakland, CA, The Heard Museum, Phoenix, AZ, The Crocker Art Museum, Sacramento, CA, Long Beach Museum of Art, Long Beach, CA, and many other around the world.

His work has also been featured in many publications: *Ishi's Brain* by Orin Starn and a book written about his life and work, *Memory and Imagination: The Legacy of Maidu Indian Artist Frank Day* by Rebecca Dobkins; to name just a few.

There will be an exhibition of Pacific Western Traders' collection of Frank Day's paintings, at the Gallery in Folsom, California 26 August through 1 October, 2006

For further information please contact Courtney Puffer on 916.985.3851; 305 Wools Street Folsom. CA 95630 or CPPWT@aol.com

