



# DORNA

Dorna McDonald May, daughter of Willow Bell Singleton and Duncan J. McDonald of Brentwood, Tennessee died November 30, 2009 at her home in Bon Aqua, Tennessee. She was buried at the family Cemetery Park on her farm in Bon Aqua. Dorna was a well-known artist whose paintings have been widely exhibited. From her youth she was also an avid horse woman. She is survived by her husband, Bo May, her daughter, Tallahassee Love May, her son, Duncan McDonald May, and her two grandchildren, Sawyer May Krusa and Tula Rose May; and also by her Michigan cousins Mary Ellen Wittkop, Maribelle Matthews, William Singleton, Richard Singleton, and John Campbell.

Dorna attended Stokes Elementary School in Nashville, before moving with her family to a farm on Murray Lane in Brentwood. Her father raised and trained thoroughbred horses. The farm is now the home of the Curry-Ingram Academy. She began riding at an early age and was a member of the Nashville Junior Riding Club where she made many life-long friends. Her first show horse was a spotted five gaited American Saddlebred named "HoneyRock". The competition and comraderie of showing horses was one of the sterling memories of her youth. She enjoyed re-telling the thrill of riding her five gaited horse "Tomahawk" to a Championship at the Celebration in Shelbyville. She continued to ride for pleasure and to enjoy the company of her friends in the "*Ladies' Auxiliary Riding & Martini Club*".

After graduating from Harpeth Hall School in 1961 she studied painting in Arezzo, Italy. She was inspired and encouraged by the late Walter Sharp to pursue a career in art. She attended Vanderbilt University, then transferred to the Art Department at the University of Colorado. In 1963 she enrolled at the University of Georgia, where she met her husband. She received her B.A. in Painting & Drawing from the University of Georgia. She also earned an M.F.A. in Fine Art.

After moving with her husband to California she worked as an art director, commercial artist, and as a costume designer for Edith Head at MGM. Dorna loved performing and appeared in numerous commercials and the cult comedy classic: "*Love is Hard to Get*".

After returning to the Nashville area in 1974 she taught in the Art Department at the University of Evansville. She moved with her family to Chicago and worked as an art director for film and television projects. She also maintained a large loft studio in Chicago for her painting.

Dorna had many one-woman shows in Tennessee, Illinois, Indiana, Florida, Georgia, and California - including a show at Cheekwood in 1984.

She published her illustrated and poetic short book *"Wisdom of the Turtle"* in 2003; and she produced *"A Book of Energy"* in 2008, based on the ancient letters of the Hebrew alphabet.

Several of her *"dream works"* were included in a juried group show in New York City in April of 2009.

*"What interests me is the revelation of mystery - the energy of life, the power of nature, which is at once both horrific and exquisitely beautiful. My intention as an artist is to have no intention. I try to allow the paintings to create themselves .... My paintings often come from dream material or from other lingering subconscious images. I try not to analyze the images but to re-create them the best I can through the process of painting, and to allow the primal experience to re-interpret itself onto the canvas - and in doing so, something new and unexpected occurs on the canvas. I enjoy being surprised and amazed, awe struck by what is revealed through the creative process."*

**A Memorial Service will be held for Dorna at Scarritt Bennett Chapel on December 19, 2009: Meditation & Music at 2pm. The Memorial Service will begin at 3pm; and as per Dorna's request, a "Champange Reception" will be held from 5-9 pm at 2984 Sidco Drive.**

Dorna was diagnosed with ovarian cancer in January 2007. She has requested that in lieu of flowers, donations be made to: **The Estuary, 1711 19<sup>th</sup> Avenue South, Nashville, TN 37212.** The Estuary is a nonprofit organization offering healing clinics to reduce side effects of chemotherapy and radiation treatments for cancer patients.



Sea Crucifix © Dorna 2000