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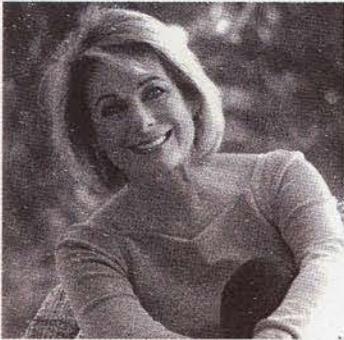
Park City:  
Utah's Fun Central

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| PARK CITY, UTAH'S SUSAN SWARTZ

## Artist Shares Credit with "Original" Creator

by Colleen Birch Maile



above: Artist Susan Swartz

Ambition played no role in the stellar career of award-winning painter Susan Swartz. Instead, the woman responsible for this edition's cover, *Cascade Springs*, spent most of her adult life striving to ensure that her family—not her art—was top priority.

Her natural ability always attracted attention. "I came from a family of artists and musicians, and in high school I took art because I loved it so. My teacher told my parents I had talent and that should be my major in college. Back then, we were inclined to follow our parents wishes. So that's what I did."

After receiving her bachelor's degree Susan married, became a schoolteacher and painted. She entered shows, including juried competitions in New York City, and often won. Her work garnered national interest and an invitation to a show in Paris. Yet when she became a mother, her focus shifted homeward. "My husband worked in Manhattan, but I didn't want to live there because I worried I'd be pulled into the art world." Instead they settled in family-friendly Princeton, New Jersey. Susan taught art in her basement; helped high school students prepare their college admissions portfolios and painted every day. Promoting her work was never part of the plan.

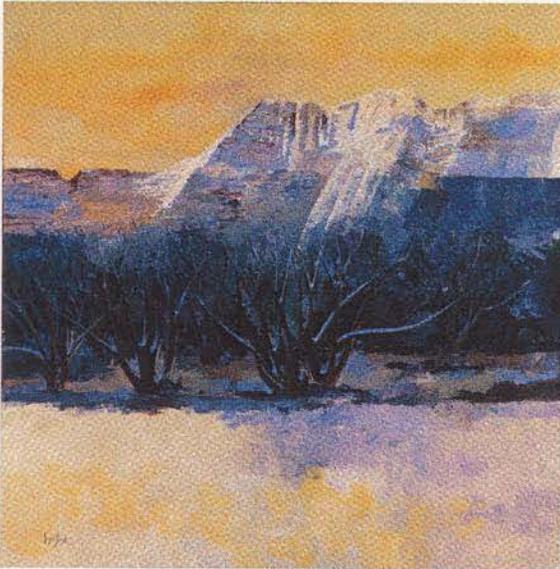
"I had these three wonderful children, and I felt that God was telling me I needed to raise my kids. I never stopped painting. I couldn't. It's not a job to me; it's part of my inner core. But I did stop painting at the rate I'd been going."

Through the years her highly personal work evolved from the realism of her youth to more Impressionistic abstracts. Family travels carried her abroad and throughout the United States. After a Utah ski vacation the Swartzes opted to make Park City their second home. It eventually became a primary residence. Wherever she went she painted. Some of that art found its way into private and corporate collections, and her solid reputation remained intact. When her youngest—twin daughters—completed college, the art world was still there.

She made a gradual, almost-accidental return to the spotlight. A cover she prepared for a Utah Symphony program attracted the attention of the Salt Lake Olympic Committee. Her passion for environmental causes made her a natural choice as the 2002 Olympic Environmental Artist. Work prepared for that endeavor remains displayed

below:  
*Evergreens Amid the Aspens*,  
48" x 48",  
acrylic on canvas





**above:**  
*Soldiers Hollow*,  
 60" x 60",  
 acrylic on canvas

in Olympic museums in Switzerland and Utah. Galleries came calling. She was included in the first book published on Wasatch Mountain painters—a group favorably compared to members of the Hudson River School. Eventually she was asked to exhibit at the Harvard Divinity School. As part of the presentation, she spoke about her faith and its integral role in her creative process. It's a subject she readily embraces.

"I really feel that God is blessing me for the decisions I made to stay home and honor him," she said. "I feel I am just one in a long line of artists dedicating their work to God. I paint every day and I always start with prayer, then I wait for His inspiration. My journeys as an artist and as a Christian are so intertwined. I know that He is the original creator, and He's been my primary teacher all through life."

To acknowledge the source of her success, Susan Swartz signs each painting "GTG." "It means Glory to God," she explained, "I like to paint what God created, and I hope that when people see my work that they will stop and ponder, and that the Impressionistic aspects will make them consider the importance of taking notice and thinking about how wonderful it is to be part of all He has done. I hope that all who see my work will know His peace."

For more information about the artist or to order a copy of her new book *Natural Revelations*, visit [www.susanswartz.com](http://www.susanswartz.com). ■

**COVER ARTIST SUSAN SWARTZ** recently released *Natural Revelations*, a compilation of work that serves as a unique narrative reflecting the artist's own spiritual response to the soul of the world around her. In four sections mirroring the seasons, the Impressionist Swartz expresses a highly personal vision of the environment. The book is enhanced by quotes from the likes of Emerson, Wadsworth, Longfellow and Thoreau and benefits from a forward by Pulitzer Prize-winning author Robert Coles and a conclusion by Jane Goodall.

Selections from the book will be presented in an exhibition of the same name at the Utah Museum of Fine Art Main Gallery from January 11 through April 13. The museum is located on the University of Utah campus at 1530 East 370 South, Salt Lake City. For more information, visit [www.umfa.utah.edu](http://www.umfa.utah.edu). ■

