

FLOURISH

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COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT

The Joy of Paint: Jay Thompson and his passion for painting

By Ava Blonigen

Everyone has a hobby that they enjoy. For Jay Thompson, that is painting.

A Swift Falls native, Thompson was a science teacher at Paynesville High School for 30 years and retired in 2023. Now, he is sharing his love for painting. He has been painting for about 12 years on and off.

"It is very calming. It is almost meditative. You see what you get done," he explained.

He was drawn to this hobby by watching Bob Ross videos, as well as seeing various relatives paint as well.

"Some of my aunts, uncles, and cousins dabbled in it, and so I just said, 'Sure, I'll give it a try.' I picked it up and said, 'I'll try to do it.' It's so fun to hit that brush back and forth on the painting easel," he explained.

"You're creating something that no one else has, and you can put your name on it, and it is your original work! Watching people paint, like on YouTube, is also cool because they walk you through it, and they sound like they are having fun!" he added.

Thompson enjoys watercolor and oil paints because both have very different qualities. "I like oil paint because you can manipulate it for a long time. But if I want something fast, then I use watercolor. I really like watercolor because the colors blend and bleed together once they hit the paper," Thompson added.

He also specifically enjoys painting flowers and birds. He finds painting ideas by taking pictures of the things around him and trying to replicate it. "I usually see ideas from pictures. I'd rather go off of a photo than paint it live. I'll take a picture and then try to replicate it," he said.

Recently, he painted 35-40 paintings of the solar eclipse. He went to Waco, Texas, and sold them at a roadside place. "It was fun to sit by the road and see people drive by. They would think I'm an artist, but they would want their picture with me," Thompson said, "My hope was to go to Texas and sell them. The last time there was an eclipse, there was no art to be sold to remember it, so I wanted to do something to remember it."

Continued on Page 2...



Retired science teacher Jay Thompson finds painting – both watercolors and with oils – to be relaxing. Plus, you're creating something new and get to put your name on it.

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He has done a variety of paintings such as cats that look like the ying and yang symbol, some meditative figures on his bedroom walls, as well as a variety of flower and bird paintings.

His dad also painted and Thompson explained that he now has original paintings to remember him by after his passing in June 2024.

Overall, he believes painting can be very relaxing and meditative for a person. "Everyone has some artistic ability. It is very relaxing, and I think people will feel good about themselves because they can create something," he concluded. "And it is something that you can do into your 80s and 90s and beyond."

Jay Thompson painted 35-40 pictures of the recent solar eclipse and sold them in Waco, Texas.



Retired science teacher Jay Thompson finds painting – both watercolors and with oils – to be relaxing. Plus, you're creating something new and get to put your name on it.



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