



artist and...

LUTHER  
KELLY HALL  
HOOKS  
NICHE  
PAINTING  
SCENES OF  
FLY FISHING

By  
Kimberly  
Pupillo

angler

**B**Y COINCIDENCE – OR MAYBE NOT – Wilkes University alumnus Luther Kelly Hall '70 was watching the movie “A River Runs Through It” when called in December to talk about the juncture of his vocation and passion.

Hall, a renowned watercolor painter and illustrator of fly fishing scenes, actually watched the 1992 classic about family and fly fishing twice that week. It happened to be on cable, but he owns the DVD too. “It’s an incredible story,” says Hall, of Mystic, Conn. “It just reminds me of my own family. A river ran through it all. My family does a lot of fishing. I grew up going fishing with my father’s family — my grandfather, my father, my brother and now my son and daughter. I had so many great times in the stream fishing. I can just really relate to it.”

He relates so much so that he decided to focus his artistic abilities on this unique genre. Hall, who earned a bachelor’s degree in art at Wilkes, had been painting traditional landscapes when he received a book showing fly fishing scenes. At that point, he decided to follow his heart and paint what he loves so much.

“Landscape is extremely competitive,” Hall notes. “Fly fishing is a good, unique niche.”

In 1992, he started exclusively painting fly fishing scenes. He’s done two-person shows with the American Museum of Fly Fishing, Manchester, Vt., as well as events in cities such as Denver and San Francisco. He also has provided illustrations for numerous magazines, including “Gray’s Sporting Journal,” “Sporting Classics Magazine” and “Flyfisher” magazine, based in Tokyo. “Yale Angler’s Journal” featured one of Hall’s paintings on its front cover – the first time the magazine used an image from a living artist.



Above: Luther Kelly Hall’s painting “Fishing the Grande,” acrylic, 18” x 24”.  
Left: Hall’s paintings have appeared in magazines across the United States and in Japan.  
PHOTO BY PHIL SHEFFIELD

He also works with the Atlantic Salmon Federation and auctions paintings off to raise money for conservation efforts. His work is featured in galleries such as Redbone Gallery, Islamorada, Fla.; Sportsman’s Gallery and Paderewski Fine Art, Atlanta, Ga., and Beaver Creek, Colo.; Morgan Gallery, Blakeslee, Pa.; and others.

Primarily, Hall uses watercolors as his medium of choice. Within the past year, however, he has used mainly oil. “I did oil at Wilkes, and I was interested in trying and developing my skill,” he explains. “I decided to experiment, and I found I enjoyed the medium. I’ve put a really serious effort into oils.”

Hall works full-time as a middle school art teacher in Mystic, but he still finds time to paint every day. The length of time it takes to complete a painting or illustration varies. After fishing a particularly scenic spot, he may shoot photographs from several vantage points. “I try to find a place that has good angles and good design.” Then he creates practice sketches and completes one or two smaller versions before completing a project. Sometimes, he will do several practice studies.

Finding time to fish can be a challenge, considering the amount of commission work he does. And he participates in celebrity fishing tournaments to raise money to fight cystic fibrosis. Still, he enjoys salt-water fly fishing from his Hydra-Sports center console boat in the Atlantic Ocean, just 10 minutes from his home. And the Kingston, Pa., native still likes to cast about the Keystone State, particularly Spruce Creek and the Little Juniata River.

Hall and wife Susan, a dental hygienist, have two children: Michael, 18, and Ashley, 12. Recently, Michael had to write an essay for a college application on a unique skill he possesses. “He’s writing it about fly fishing,” Hall said. “He came in and saw that I was watching ‘A River Runs Through It,’ and he sat down with me and we watched it together.”

“ I GREW UP GOING FISHING with my father’s family – my grandfather, my father, my brother and now my son and daughter.”

**Luther Kelly Hall, Mystic, Conn.**

**BA, Art 1970**

**Career:** Painter, middle school art teacher

**Notable:** Gained renown with paintings depicting his favorite pastime, fly fishing

**Website:** [www.lutherhall.com](http://www.lutherhall.com)