



Paul Andrew Bean Class of 2017

Paul Andrew Bean graduated from Oroville High School (OHS) in 1975. The summer prior to his senior year he attended art classes at Chico State University and received fifteen college credits through the Advanced Placement Program in Art. He also won an Outstanding Achievement Award and attended mechanical and architectural drafting classes at OHS. In his junior year Paul began to exhibit and sell his artwork in art galleries in downtown Oroville. Before graduating, he created a mural for the US Forestry Service.

Paul was also an avid athlete. He ran track and cross country and won medals from competitions statewide and received his Block O Letter every year he participated in sports.

After graduation Paul worked for construction contractors in Sacramento and Oroville as a carpenter and drawing blueprints. In 1977, he worked at Oroville's RCBS, an international manufacturer of ammunition reloading equipment, while enrolled at Butte College.

At the age of 21 Paul was diagnosed with a brain aneurism. A test (Arteriogram), inadvertently blocked the blood or oxygen to his spinal column leaving him a quadriplegic. The next 2 years were difficult from surgeries to save his life, to extensive physical and occupational rehabilitation. A specialized splint for his right hand was made that enabled him to grip objects. This device was the catalyst that resurrected his spirit to overcome the challenges he faced as a disabled man.

After Paul returned to home, he stated: *"For two years, I really didn't do anything. I just stayed home and didn't go out in public." "I came to the conclusion, I could either look at all the negative things I couldn't do, or focus on all the positive things I could do."*

Using his splint, he tried creating Art again. *"It was challenging, but not impossible"*. He devised special equipment and techniques to compensate for his physical limitations.

Paul enrolled at Butte College to obtain his AA Degree, study Art History, and Architectural Design. While in College, he continued exhibiting and selling his artwork in art galleries and restaurants in Chico.

He was exposed to Art from early childhood through books, magazines, and Art museums. He was inspired growing up in California's natural beauty. His biggest inspiration was witnessing his artistically gifted mother, older brother and sister. He also studied the old masters of the Renaissance Period, and was fascinated by the 19th century pre-Raphaelite painters of Britain.

Post college years, he began to focus on his love of Nature. Paul was concerned about the endangered natural habitats of wildlife globally. Following the lead of a well-known California Marine Life Conservation Artist, Paul thought he could make a difference. From that point on, he considered himself an "Environmental Artist".

Paul worked with various environmental groups to help draw awareness to global environmental issues. His paintings were used by Greenpeace International, The Nature Conservancy, and the San Francisco Zoo's Adopt an Acre Program to name a few. He published his artwork as posters with a portion of the sales being donated to environmental organizations. Several schools in San Francisco sold Paul's posters to purchase Rainforest land that was converted into a National Park in Costa Rica.

After becoming disabled Paul became involved with VSA (Very Special Arts) an international organization supporting the arts for children, adults and professionals, with disabilities worldwide. It was founded in 1974 by former U.S. Ambassador to Ireland, [Jean Kennedy Smith](#) (President Kennedy's sister), in [Washington, DC](#). She purchased 2 original paintings from Paul.

One of Paul's more challenging works was a commission to paint a mural for the Hartford Insurance Company. The mural entitled, "Transitional Seasons" was painted on four 4 by 5 foot panels. He had a 20-foot-long easel made to paint all the panels. The mural depicted the transition of seasons of the New England Woods surrounding the headquarters in Connecticut. The project took 11 months to complete.

Paul also donated his time to giving talks about people with disabilities, Art, and environment to elementary and high school classrooms across California including Nelson Avenue Middle School, and OHS.

Paul has exhibited his work in group, and solo exhibitions throughout California, nationwide, Europe and Japan. His original paintings are in the collections of corporate, public and private collectors.

His art has been published by various nationwide Art Publishers as limited-edition prints, advertising, education, posters and other retail products.

His work despite his physical condition, dispels the myth that an individual with a disability can never be successful in this world.

Paul currently resides in Phoenix, Arizona.