

## Spotlight Artist

# *Mary Hafner*

Charles Hazlip's Wednesday afternoon oil painting class at the Tallahassee Senior Center is an activity I became interested in shortly after the death of my husband of 49+ years in 2002. He passed after a heroic fight with Alzheimer's disease. I was lucky because I was able to care for him at home, but it also kept me very busy. Having more time on my hands and feeling the need to connect with people, the oil painting class was the perfect solution.

A one-room country school in Missouri gave me my first introduction to art, and I loved it! Friday afternoons', were my favorite time of the week when the teacher told us to put away our school books and get out our art supplies. I fell in love with painting pictures using crayons and watercolors.

During my high school years, art was a major focus of mine. I participated in art class as much as I possibly could. We did pencil sketches, colored chalk pictures and tempera paintings. One of my fondest memories of high school was creating posters for the soldiers that were at war overseas.

Some years later I moved to Athens, GA, where my husband taught at the University of Georgia. One day I noticed a local artist, whose work I really liked, was offering oil painting classes and I decided to sign up. It was in this class that I learned the basic techniques of oil painting.

When my husband accepted a position at Florida State University and we moved to Tallahassee, I took a few art classes at LeMoyne. However, the needs of our four children quickly took center stage and I spent less time painting.

But now, at age 86, art is a big part of my life. I have always loved the outdoors, and nature and art are everywhere in God's world. I like to take automobile trips and always enjoy the scenery. I never understood why anyone would choose to read while traveling! And I suppose that is the reason that I like to paint landscapes.

The oil painting class at the Senior Center is one of the highlights of my week. You can get lost in painting and surprises often happen when paint goes on the canvas. It is hard work, but rewarding. I would suggest to anyone who enjoys art, even though they may not have painted before, to give it a try. With a good teacher and direction, they might be surprised at what they can do. A bonus that comes with joining an art class are the good friendships that are developed and enjoyed.