



*This design created by Wayne Smyth depicts a celebration of birds combined with a 25 for the AFA's 25th anniversary. The 1999 Convention tee shirts will carry this colorful illustration. Be sure you come to the convention to pick up your convention tee shirt. It is sure to become a coveted collector's item!*

## Wayne Smyth an Unconventional Artist

by Roger Bringas, North Hollywood, CA

**I**n the wee hours of the morning, at a table in the smoke-filled cocktail lounge at last year's convention hotel in Baltimore, Wayne Smyth and Jean Hessler (A.F.A.'s Art Director) were covertly discussing ideas for promoting the 25th anniversary of the A.F.A. After hours of deep thought and hard work, on a simple cocktail napkin, Smyth sketched out, as only a talented artist can do, what would be the theme for this year's convention. He envisioned a "football jersey" with beautiful tropical birds encir-

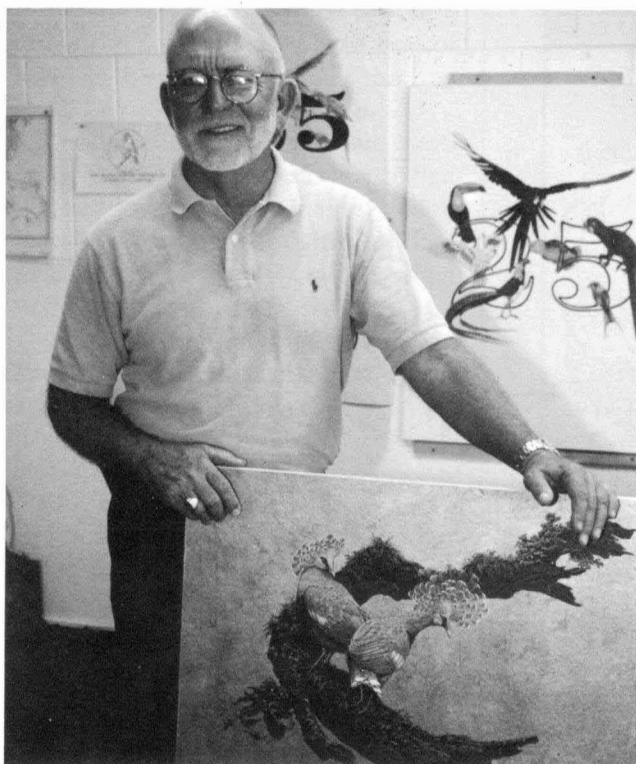


*This is Smyth's first sketch of the logo, executed on the back of a well used cocktail napkin in the Baltimore Omni Hotel bar during the AFA '98 convention.*

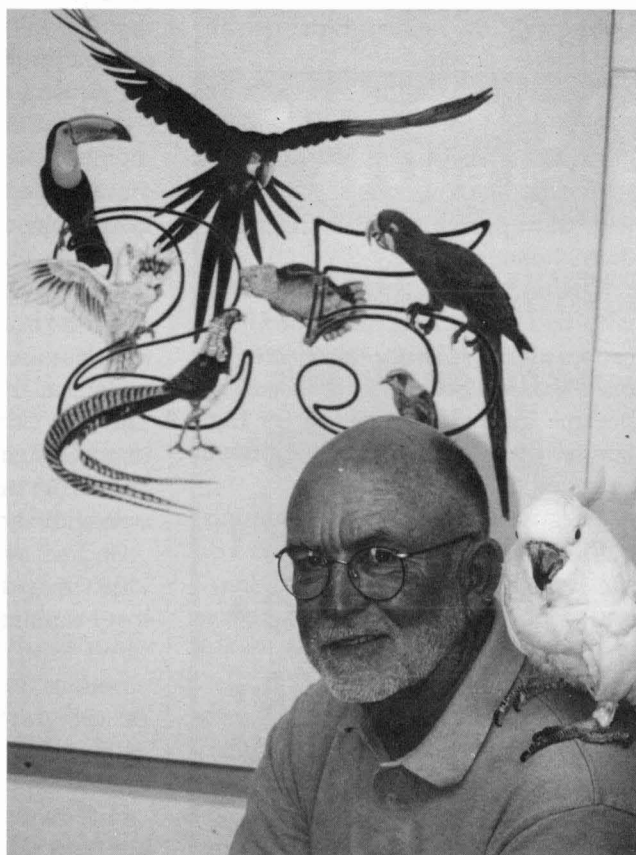
cling the number 25.

The idea was well received and Smyth was asked by the A.F.A. for the fourth year in a row to create an artistic theme for our annual get together. In the '97 and '98 conventions his work from the poster of "The World's Best Talking Parrots" was used for the theme, and A.F.A. members may remember his Hornbill painting which graced the covers of the '96 convention Proceedings and Program.

Born in Chicago and raised in Florida, Smyth early on felt a strong connection to art and nature. He followed a pre-medical curriculum as an under-graduate, eventually earning a Bachelor's degree in Advertising Design. He continued on with graduate studies in Medical Illustration at the National Naval Medical School in



*Smyth displays a painting of crowned pigeons created for an upcoming book on jungle birds.*



*Wayne Smyth with his ever present pet cockatoo. The AFA 25th anniversary logo is in the background.*

Bethesda. After finishing his studies, Smyth went to work for two International Advertising firms where he honed his skills for seven years as an Art Director and Illustrator.

Throughout the early part of his career, he lived in Houston, New York, Rome, and Oslo. After travelling exten-

sively through Europe, Smyth relocated to East Africa where he spent eight years as a guide and lecturer on photographic safaris in Kenya and Tanzania. Returning home to the U.S. in 1980, he has spent the last 19 years as a professional artist.

Residing in Los Angeles, Smyth has

surrounded himself with decorative objects and works of art collected during his journeys all over the world. Converting a large room in his house into his own art studio has proven convenient and productive. The studio is shared with his pet cockatoo and they both enjoy a beautiful view, through large picture windows, into his tranquil and well-planted garden.

An enthusiastic naturalist, Smyth's paintings reflect an intimate understanding of the birds and flora that he renders. In July he is scheduled to travel to Costa Rica to join a scientific expedition studying magnificent sea turtles. He hopes to see many other plants and animals especially psittacines.

Today a large portion of Smyth's work is focused on creating elegant, decorative screens that express the qualities inherent in classical Japanese art of the Edo period. His intent has been to follow the spirit of the Edo masters in making beautifully decorative art that begins with a thorough understanding of nature, and then transcends it. The ability to analyze, reconstruct, and improve upon the sublime beauties of nature is characteristic of the Edo period. Along with the arts of bonsai, architecture, Kabuki Theatre, and the tea ceremony, the painted screens (also known as byōbu) are the essence of the decorative impulse; that is, the desire to remake natural forms that delight the eye and are more beautiful than true.

Smyth's meticulous craftsmanship in building the screens and his perceptual insight into natural forms, enable him today to create works that rival some of the best of the classic screens. The screens are exquisitely finished with borders of antique Japanese brocades and moldings of lacquered or hand-rubbed rare woods. His work is commissioned by top designers and has been featured in various exhibitions and publications worldwide.

We hope you all enjoy the artistic theme for this year's convention. We are grateful to Wayne Smyth for all of the time, hard work, dedication, and professionalism that he has devoted to the A.F.A.. Thanks go out to Bob Berry for introducing this skilled artist and bird lover to our organization. It's been 25 good years and here is to 25 more! 🐦