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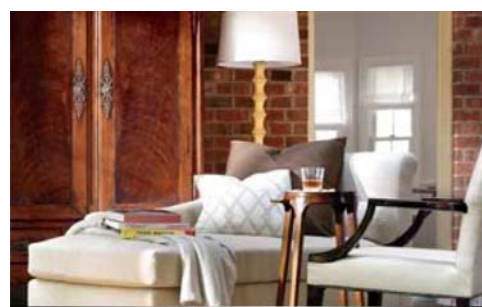
Eight Highwaymen to attend St. Augustine art show

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Group of Florida artists got their start in 1950s, '60s

By **LAUREN JONES**, The Times-Union

Wispy sunset skies, droopy wind-blown trees reflecting on marsh water and bold red poinciana trees may be a fantasy of what Florida looks like, but the Florida Highwaymen have made their living off that style.



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Eight of the original Florida Highwaymen - African-American artists who first gained recognition in the 1950s and '60s - will be at The Antique Auction and Highwaymen Art Show Saturday in St. Augustine.

The artists attending are Curtis Arnett, Al Black, Mary Ann Carroll, Isaac Knight, R.L. Lewis, R.A. McClendon, Willie Reagan and Jimmy Stovall.

Among the 26 recognized Florida Highwaymen, seven are deceased, some have pursued other interests and some still paint.

Many of them began painting and selling their work along the side of some of Florida's major highways and in business offices, often for as little as \$10. Their work later became collectible, and they earned the name Florida Highwaymen. In 2004, the Highwaymen were inducted into the Florida Artists Hall of Fame.

Since their initial success, a lot of the Highwaymen have had children who have gone on to paint and have loosely become known as the "Second Generation Highwaymen." But it will be the original Highwaymen at the St. Augustine show.

Jena Baker, auctioneer for Great Expectations Auction Company, said there was a lot of negotiating and calling when trying to arrange this event.

"They usually don't show together. Mostly due to age, it was very difficult to arrange," Baker said.

During the era of segregation, it was difficult for the artists to show and sell their work.

"They became icons for being creative and handy in what they do," Baker said.

Today their work sells for anywhere from \$400 to several thousand.

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The event will allow buyers to purchase the art directly from the artist. The artists will answer questions and pose for photos. They will then demonstrate their painting skills for viewers. A documentary video of their life stories will be shown. One painting will be auctioned off, and the proceeds will go to The Florida Special Olympics.

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