Bob Timberlake Biography

Bob Timberlake is an internationally acclaimed realist painter and designer who makes his home in Lexington, North Carolina. After graduating with a B.S. degree in Industrial Relations in 1959 from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, he worked in five family businesses in a hands-on, executive capacity. He married his childhood sweetheart in 1957 and has three children and seven grandchildren.

Timberlake began painting as a young child but began his professional career in 1970. Although he received no formal art education or training, his work is best known for its intricate attention to color and detail. His depiction of the simple life in his native North Carolina has endeared his work to millions of admirers around the world for 40 years. From the *Somewhere In Time* book, Charles Kuralt quotes “What happened was this: I met a painter, also a North Carolinian, who, like me, has known some of these old things himself and heard to tell of many others, and has felt within himself the strong urge to get it down, as much as he can, and pass it on.” Victor Hammer, brother of Art Collector & Connoisseur, Dr. Armand Hammer, and Director of Hammer Galleries, N.Y.C. is quoted: “Nobody likes your work but the PEOPLE and they always will.”

Timberlake’s art career has been marked by consistent and resounding success. The first one-man exhibition of his work was held in 1970 at the Gallery of Contemporary Art (now SECCA) in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. The show sold out immediately, a first for SECCA. He has had eight highly successful exhibitions at New York City’s prestigious Hammer Galleries. His first show at Hammer Galleries sold out prior to opening and subsequent shows have also sold out and been successful. Timberlake’s work has also been exhibited throughout the United States and is the first and only Southerner in modern history to have a one-man exhibit at the Corcoran Gallery in Washington, D.C. He also has exhibited at the Frye Museum in Seattle, Washington, the R.W. Norton Gallery in Shreveport, LA, the North Carolina Museum of Art, the North Carolina Museum of History, the Huntington Museum in Huntingon, WV (twice), the Greenville County Museum of Art in Greenville, South Carolina and internationally two shows at the Isetan Gallery in Tokyo, Japan. In 1990 and again in 1991, Timberlake was selected by the renowned Hubbard Museum in New Mexico to exhibit his works twice in competition for the prestigious Hubbard Award for Excellence, which recognizes outstanding American Realist artists. After opening in New Mexico, the exhibition traveled to Moscow and Berlin. Among others, he has also exhibited at the Wake Forest Art Museum, Appalachian State University in Boone, NC, and exhibited four times with his mentor, Andrew Wyeth.

In 1995, Bob was honored by the North Carolina Museum of History in Raleigh, North Carolina with a 25th anniversary retrospective showing of his work entitled “At Home in North Carolina with Bob Timberlake”.

Not content to confine his talents to a single medium, Bob Timberlake has designed four stamps for the US Postal Service. Bob was one of only a handful of artists to be asked to design a Christmas stamp and his work was featured on a very popular Seasons Greeting Christmas Stamp in 1980, both the North and South Carolina commemorative Statehood Stamps (1988, 1989), and the bi-centennial postcard for the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in 1993.

Timberlake has been honored by Presidents Carter and Reagan in the White House for his work with Keep America and NC Beautiful, Inc. and by Prince Charles in Buckingham Palace.

Well known for his charitable endeavors, he has received numerous awards in recognition of his service to the Boy Scouts of America, the Duke Comprehensive Cancer Center, the Duke Children’s Hospital, the Lions Club, the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation, and Keep America and NC Beautiful, Inc. He has also been the recipient of the prestigious Albert Schweitzer Medal for Artistry (the only artist to receive this prestigious award) and the American Forestry Lifetime Award. Timberlake’s donation of a print release entitled “Jonquils” as well as additional donations of other limited edition reproductions have raised millions of dollars for the Duke Children’s Hospital, Duke Comprehensive Cancer Center and UNC’s Lineberger Comprehensive Cancers Centers. Duke has honored him in 1989 with the Shingleton Award for his support of cancer research. He also received the First “Iron Eyes Cody Award” for his work for Keep America Beautiful.

In 1979, the artist was the honored recipient of the North Carolina Public Servant of the Year Award. Other humanitarian awards include The North Carolinian of the Year from the NC Press Association and the Silver Beaver, which is the highest Civilian honor awarded by the Boy Scouts of America.

Bob Timberlake received the American Forestry Lifetime Award for “Enhancing Public Appreciation of America’s Natural Resources through Art” in 1982. He is a lifetime member of the American Forestry Service.

In 1990, Timberlake launched a highly successful licensing company, Bob Timberlake, Inc., with The World of Bob Timberlake® collection of furniture. This collection revolutionized and brought excitement back into the industry by introducing the concept of branding a furniture collection according to a famous personality or lifestyle concept. The collection was recently named the most significant introduction of a line of furniture in the last 40 years and is the most successful in the history of furniture. The media touted his furniture as “The Antiques of the future”.

Since that initial offering, seven additional lines have been released: Old Salem in 1994, An Arts and Crafts Collection in 1998, Riverwood in 1999, Lodge in 2000, GrandKids in 2001 and Vintage Reserve in 2002. Bob Timberlake furniture has well passed the $1 billion mark in wholesale sales. Bob Timberlake has licensed products to over 20 leading manufacturers in many other areas including home textiles, home furnishing accessories, building products, and apparel.

Timberlake has been presented with several awards in the home furnishings industry as well including the top designer award for bed fashions from Cotton, Inc. in 1993 and the prestigious Academy of Achievement Award from the Accessories Resource Team (A.R.T.) in 1994. He was recently awarded the 2004 International Furnishings and Design Association (IFDA) Trailblazer Award. Most currently, he was inducted into the Furniture Hall of Fame.

In 1997, Timberlake introduced a collection of 24 home plans and licensed structural and fashion building components in order to create complete Bob Timberlake homes, built and furnished with Bob Timberlake products. The first Bob Timberlake show home was built in High Point, NC in 1997. Since then, additional show homes have been built in North Carolina, Virginia, Georgia and Utah. Bob Timberlake home plans are currently available through Southern Living®. Many Lodges, Hotels, and Inns have been furnished and decorated with the “Timberlake” style.
He has helped, along with his talented folks, to create a magnificent Inn overlooking Chetola Lake and the majestic Blue Ridge Mountains. The Bob Timberlake Inn at Chetola Resort in Blowing Rock, NC opened to the public in September 2004. The Bob Timberlake Inn is an 8-room bed and breakfast featuring Bob Timberlake furniture, lamps, accessories, artwork and personal mementos in the historic 1846 Manor House at Chetola. The Inn and complex offer guests a top spa, fishing, outdoor activities, great food, accommodations, and events. Bob’s 1930-31, 6-wheel Model A Ford Roadster is used for weddings, parades, and other activities in Blowing Rock. It is the perfect backdrop for Timberlake’s extraordinary furnishings, accessories, artwork and personal mementos. The Bob Timberlake Inn takes you back to a glorious time in the past with all the comforts of the present.

Also in 1997, Bob Timberlake opened a new 15,000 square foot retail facility at 1714 East Center Street Ext, The Bob Timberlake Gallery in his hometown of Lexington, North Carolina 27292. The gallery features Bob Timberlake art, apparel, furniture and home furnishing accessories, as well as a broad selection of gift and collectible items. The Bob Timberlake Gallery also has a fine collection of the artist’s original paintings and memorabilia showing some of his many and varied collections. A second Bob Timberlake Gallery opened in September of 2001 at 946 Main Street in Blowing Rock, North Carolina 28605. Local folks and travelers from all over the world visit the Galleries. The Lexington Gallery has been touted by NC Tourism as the best place to visit. (Was there an award?)

In addition to the retail facilities, Bob Timberlake offers a comprehensive selection of gifts and accessories on its website, www.bobtimberlake.com This features a broad range of both Bob Timberlake licensed products and related products, which are offered through The Bob Timberlake Galleries. Bob Timberlake accessories, home textiles, apparel and more are available through a retail relationship at Bass Pro Shops throughout the United States and online at www.basspro.com.


The year 2005 marked the 35th Anniversary of Bob’s professional art career. In celebration of Bob’s 35th Anniversary and the 35th Anniversary of Piedmont Community College in Roxboro, NC, the college hosted an originals exhibition to honor him. The retrospective exhibition entitled “Bob Timberlake: Coming Home” was held in June. Bob’s ties run deep in Roxboro. In 1905, Edgar Anderson Timberlake moved his wife, four sisters-in-laws and widowed mother-in-law from Roxboro (Person County) to Lexington where his descendants, including his grandson, Roberts Edgar “Bob” Timberlake, still live today. After 100 years, Bob “returned home” to commemorate this event. The Timberlake Family History was also featured at the Person County Museum of History in Roxboro during his exhibition.

On January 19, 2006, Governor Mike Easley presented Bob Timberlake with the “Order of the Long Leaf Pine” during a private ceremony at The Bob Timberlake Gallery. “Bob Timberlake is not only known in our state, but also around the world for his rural landscape paintings and award winning furniture designs,” Easley said. “The citizens of this state are truly proud and honored to have such a talented artist calling North Carolina home.”

An announcement was made on March 1, 2006 that The World of Bob Timberlake® furniture, America’s most successful furniture line in history, would continue to be domestically manufactured by Linwood Furniture Inc, in Lexington, North Carolina, thanks to a partnership between Bob Timberlake, Kepley-Frank Hardwoods, Inc., and Lexington Home Brands. Since The World of Bob Timberlake® debuted in the fall of 1989, many furniture companies have shifted major lines to overseas production. But Bob Timberlake remained dedicated to his beliefs. He insisted this line be produced in the United States, especially in his own hometown by hometown crafts folks.
In January 2007, Bob Timberlake celebrated his 70th birthday. To celebrate Bob’s birthday and legendary career, The Bob Timberlake Gallery in Lexington hosted “Bob Timberlake — Celebrating 70”. This exhibition was a unique gathering of 70 original Bob Timberlake paintings — each commemorating one of Bob’s 70 years. The exhibit also featured childhood and early works, as well as highlights from Bob’s career in furniture and home design. The exhibition was the first of its kind at the Lexington Gallery and was originally scheduled for June 15th – July 28th but was extended through August 31, 2007 due to popular demand.

The release of “Ella’s” marked a significant milestone in the production of Bob Timberlake’s artwork. In the spring of 2008, “Ella’s” was the very first limited-edition Timberlake reproduction to be produced entirely by the Giclée Printing Process. It offered Timberlake Collectors the very best and highest quality art reproductions available in the marketplace. Bob has for 40 years been the “milestone” of art reproduction, and his printers have won numerous National & State Awards.

On March 24, 2009, the North Carolina Department of Transportation dedicated a 4.8-mile section of I-85 from U.S. 64 to NC 8 as the Bob Timberlake Freeway, in honor of Bob Timberlake. Transportation Secretary Gene Conti officially named the highway at a ceremony presented at the Bob Timberlake Gallery in Lexington.

Bob has been and is involved with many art and environmental issues and boards. He has raised funds for so many worthwhile projects from County & Volunteer Fire Departments to our NC Wildlife Habitat Foundation and many others. Bob has used his talents and art to raise many thousands of dollars for the Keep America & NC Beautiful and Green, Lions Clubs, Easter Seals, North Carolina Cystic Fibrosis Foundation, Boy Scouts of America, Duke Cancer Research and Children’s Hospitals, Save the Hatteras Lighthouse, Salvation Army, as well as many other local and distinct worthwhile projects.

In celebration of Bob’s release of “Lighthouse Window,” Bob was present for a signing at the Woods Gallery on Bald Head Island, North Carolina on May 23, 2009. Other works of Bob’s on Bald Head were shown and sold that evening also. It was a highly successful show and enjoyed by everyone in attendance. Bob has been a visitor to the island for 56 years and has done many paintings there.

In 2009, Bob’s staff at the Gallery and Bob Timberlake, Inc. donated products and volunteered time to make ABC’s “Extreme Home Makeover” in Davidson County a “Resounding Success” for the Creasey family. As Bob quotes, “It brought our county and the area together”.

The Charity League of Lexington presented their fiftieth annual Holiday House Tour that featured the 200th Birthday Anniversary Celebration Tour of Bob Timberlake’s Studio. Bob’s studio was originally built by Henry Shoaf in 1809 and was located on Highway 64 just west of Lexington, NC. In 1989, Bob Timberlake acquired the building from the Shoaf Family and moved it to its present location on Highway 47 just south of Lexington. This historic property was open to the public for the first time as part of the organization’s largest fundraiser of 2009. Thousands attended and over $34,000 was raised for local charity.

2011 was a momentous year starting with two of the most respected families in furniture – Bob Timberlake and Hickory, NC based, Century Furniture – teaming up to build upon the success of one of the longest running licenses in industry history. In that same year, Bob partnered with Shaw Living to produce a collection of rug designs inspired by the classic Timberlake themes of everyday rural southern living.

Bob’s 75th Birthday Celebration began in January 2012. The celebration showcased Seven Decades of Art, from the 1940’s to 2012 of original artwork. The show began at High Point University’s Sechrest Gallery, then moved to Blowing Rock Art and History Museum, and later came home to the Bob Timberlake Gallery in Lexington in December 2012.
Bob’s book: *Life’s Lessons: Lines of Wisdom from a Faithful Stream* was published by Goosepen Studio & Press as an enriching book for the soul. Two men, Bob Timberlake and Ambassador Mark Erwin, both collectors of aphorisms, tales, and inspirational quotations for many years, collaborated on this book to share their favorite lines of wisdom from sources as diverse as Grandma Moses to Billy Graham, George Carlin and a Bermudian taxi driver. Over sixty Timberlake paintings accompany the quotations.

In 2013, Bob Timberlake and the Timberlake family celebrated 100 years in home furnishings. Bob’s grandfather, Edgar Anderson Timberlake, started a retail store in 1910 in Lexington, NC and later incorporated into Piedmont Furniture Company in 1913. Since October 1990, Bob’s 20 years as a furniture and accessory designer has marked him as a huge success and household name. One of his various lines of furniture, *World of Bob Timberlake Collection®*, has been acclaimed “the most successful in history.” The media touted it as “the antiques of the future.”

Bob Timberlake and Eddie Bridges, lifelong outdoorsman and founder of the North Carolina Wildlife Habitat Foundation, partner to present a spectacular collection of three wildlife reproductions Bob has painted in the first ever Sportsman’s Series. The fall 2014 release was in honor of a long-standing relationship with conservation leaders in Bob’s home state of North Carolina. Proceeds from this series have been earmarked to support NCWHF’s largest conservation project to date that will involve multiple conservation organizations across the state.


2015 marked a special year at the Bob Timberlake Gallery for hosting events that included a Valentine’s dinner, wine tastings, and much more. People traveled from all over to enjoy the beautiful architecture, furnishings, food, music, & ambience that can only be found at the Bob Timberlake Gallery & Museum.

In the fall 2015, Bob Timberlake and good friend, Eddie Bridges, partnered again for the 2nd Sportsman’s Event held at the Bob Timberlake Gallery. Bob’s unveiled his “Post Season Reunion” painting at this event. The painting was inspired from the Duck Blind No. 6 at Camp Bryan Farms in Eastern, North Carolina. Proceeds from this painting support the North Carolina Wildlife Habitat Foundation.

New building projects emerge with Bob Timberlake partnering with Farmstead Homes to build tiny cottages and park homes. The first tiny cottage was open to the public at the Bob Timberlake Christmas Open House in December 2015. This particular tiny cottage was named Riverwood, the name of Bob’s first studio. The response was well received as local television stations, including WGHF-Fox 8 News, requested interviews with Bob to learn more about his involvement in the tiny home movement.

Bob Timberlake continues doing what he most enjoys in life: spending time with family, painting at his Studio, hunting and fly fishing with dear friends. His involvement with fund raisers and charities continues amongst his busy schedule.

Bob Timberlake, the artist/designer, is currently the chairman of Bob Timberlake, Inc., the licensing company that acts as the manager and agent of the Bob Timberlake brand across two divisions: Bob Timberlake Licensing and The Bob Timberlake Gallery.

For more information on Bob Timberlake, please contact The Bob Timberlake Gallery, 1714 East Center Street Extension, Lexington, NC 27292. Phone 800-244-0095 or 336-249-4428. For more information on the Bob Timberlake licensing program, please contact Bob Timberlake, Inc., 1714 East Center Street Extension, Lexington, NC 27292. Phone: 800-244-0095 or via e-mail at customerservice@bobtimberlake.com.