

Class of 1933 – Thornton Robin Utz



He spent his young years doodling in textbooks. After discovering his artistic talent, he struggled to save enough money to attend art school in Chicago. With the country in a depression, Utz could afford only one year at the American Academy of the Arts, and though he studied there for only a short time, he learned the secret to being a

great artist: drawing continually. And draw Utz did, as well as paint, illustrate and design.

Initial recognition of his work came for his illustrations.

During the 1940s and '50s, Utz provided advertising illustrations for clients such



as Coca-Cola, General Electric, and Ford Motor Co. His work also graced more than 50 covers of the 'Saturday Evening Post,' Eventually, Utz dedicated himself full time to working in the fine arts, which for him included portraiture and sculpture. International fame came with portraits of Princess Grace of Monaco and President Jimmy Carter, as well as the Carter family.

During his achievements, Utz never fancied himself a talented artist. 'He was so humble, thought so little of himself,' said his daughter Dawn Hadley. 'He never thought of himself as a great artist. That was just his work and his trade. That's what he did to provide for his family.'



During his lifetime, Utz became a leading contemporary painter of nudes and portraits, preserving this tradition with spontaneity and joy. In addition to classic figure painting, he attacked the areas of portraiture, sculpture, stained glass and



architecture as well. Utz saw the nude, however, as an endless challenge. His numerous paints of nudes are reminiscent of Degas' coloration and Renoir's brushwork, and are proof of his artistic triumphs. "Drawing and printing the nude is an endless challenge," Utz said. "For subject matter I prefer a model to perform an action or a chore she would naturally and normally do alone, such as bathing, fixing her nails, and so forth. In my paintings I want express a respect for the particular young woman portrayed and for women in general."