Presentation to Focus on Painter of National Parks

NWACC Faculty Member to Present Lecture on Work of Gunnar Widforss

BENTONVILLE, Ark. (March 15, 2013) -- Through the Roaring Twenties and the first half of the Great Depression, the Swedish-born landscape painter Gunnar Widforss (1879-1934) focused his discerning eye and passionate energy on the national parks of the American West.

Curator and author Alan Petersen has been uncovering Widforss’ story and is working on a book on Widforss’ life and art as well as compiling a catalogue raisonne of works created by Widforss. Petersen, an adjunct faculty member in art at NorthWest Arkansas Community College, will present a slide lecture and tell the story of Widforss’ life and art work at 7:30 p.m. March 28 in Peterson Auditorium of the Shewmaker Center for Global Business Development.

Because of Widforss’ untimely death at only age 55, and because the rise of modernism in the early-20th century consigned many highly skilled realistic painters to obscurity, Widforss’ legacy is largely unknown today. The amiable Swede led a bohemian life in search of beautiful landscapes to paint.

Widforss dressed formally as he worked and always attracted wonder-struck onlookers when he painted in Yosemite Valley, on the rim of Grand Canyon and the other locations he favored in the national parks. Park Service friends such as Ansel Hall and Stephen Mather as well as tourists marveled at the accuracy of his painting and the way in which he was able to capture the dramatic landscapes. Today, Widforss’ work is known only to a small number of dedicated collectors, the descendants of his family and friends, and those who discover his paintings when they visit the national parks he depicted.

NorthWest Arkansas Community College is a smart choice for students wanting to pursue quality higher education. As an accredited institution through The Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association, NWACC is a public two-year institution that serves and strengthens its surrounding communities in Benton and Washington counties by helping our students maximize their potential and exceed expectations. With state-of-the-art facilities, NWACC provides excellent academic instruction and workforce training needed to succeed, offering personalized attention from highly respected faculty, staff, and administrators. For more information, visit www.nwacc.edu.