

# ROSANNA HARDIN HALL

AS BOTH A FORMER JOURNALIST and an artist, Rosanna Hardin Hall has lived in and traveled to many places: New York; Washington, DC; New Mexico; Hawaii; Italy; France. But no matter where she went or what she accomplished, she felt as if she were still searching for an intangible “something.” Then, in 1995, the illnesses of her mother and sister brought her back to her childhood home in Indianapolis’ Woodruff Place. Among the 19th-century Victorian residences, picturesque fountains, statues and mature trees, Hall experienced a revelation: “This,” she thought, “is what I have been looking for.”

“I loved home,” Hall says today. “I grew up in Indianapolis, and I was always looking for Woodruff Place again, it seems.” She now occupies the third floor of the same childhood home that once was shared by her parents and grandmother. In a space that serves as both studio and living quarters, Hall devotes herself to painting full-time, creating picturesque garden and landscape scenes in oil. Surrounded by her family’s cherished antiques, wicker furniture and the 1930s-era green-floral wallpaper hung by her grandmother, she no longer feels the need to search. In Hall’s case, at least, you can indeed go home again.

It is no surprise, then, that Hall’s love of art can be traced back to her childhood, when her family frequently traveled the country for her father’s job. Drawing helped Hall pass the time on long train trips. “Art has just always been something I had to do,” she says.

Those creative pursuits were put on the back burner, however, when she decided to pursue an international-relations degree at Purdue University, which led to a job in

journalism. Hall met and was briefly married to Robert Novak, now a syndicated columnist. Over the years, she worked as a feature reporter and occasional art critic for papers including the *Santa Fe New Mexican*, *Honolulu Star Bulletin* and former *Indianapolis News*.

Still, despite her success at writing, she never forgot her first love. “I was always trying to figure out how to become a full-time artist,” Hall says. Her first foray into oil painting came during a trip to the Fontainebleau Ecole Des Beaux Arts, located in a chateau outside Paris. She was so enamored of the process that she later decided to attend Herron School of Art in Indianapolis and pursue a bachelor of fine arts degree.

The aspiring artist put herself through school by doing public relations for Herron. Through the school’s work/study program, she helped produce one of David Letterman’s first television talk shows, *Clover Power*, for 4-H. “I’d be on the program if someone didn’t show up,” she says with a laugh. “I once did a pastel drawing of him while he was interviewing me.”

In 1971, after graduating from Herron, Hall moved to Taos, New Mexico, where, in between four part-time jobs, she painted landscapes, ranchers and Native Americans—her first attempt at making any money from her

art. After three years, she left for Santa Fe and jumped back into journalism for several years to “feed the troops”—i.e., herself. All the while, though, she continued to paint, and even as she progressed to the *Honolulu Star Bulletin*, she felt the continuous pull of her artwork. “I’d see my byline in the paper, but it wasn’t anything like the thrill of painting,” Hall recalls. “My life has gone back and forth between writing and painting, but I was always trying to get back to the art again.”

She earned a master’s degree in fine art from the University of Hawaii. In that tropical setting, she focused her oil paintings—six-foot canvases—on the soft colors of the beautiful landscapes, using long, wide strokes that emanated from her shoulders for a striking look.

**True Colors** At the Florence Academy of Art in Italy, Hall learned how to grind pigment with linseed oil and mix oil paints, a process she now uses exclusively.

Eventually, she moved back to Santa Fe and resumed her life as a full-time artist. One day as she was flipping through an art magazine, she was drawn to pictures of Italian towns. Pinning them on her wall, she thought, “I’d love to go and paint there some day.” Later, she saw an ad for an art class in Florence, Italy, and knew she had to attend.

Hall spent three months at the Florence Academy of Art in 1994, studying with American-born painter Daniel Graves. Students drew every morning, using copies of Roman and



## rosanna hardin hall

Woodruff Place

972-0898

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Plein-air studies, about \$300

Plein-air (outdoor) art classes, \$100 for 3 hours

### MOST RECENT EXHIBITION

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Fall 2002

Hilbert Circle Theatre