

# Tribute to Three Stamp Artists

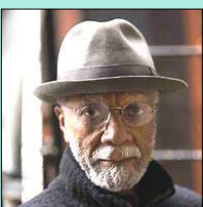
by Don Neal



FLOYD COOPER, born January 8, 1956, in Tulsa, Oklahoma, was an author and illustrator who had over 60 published children's books, more than 2000 book cover illustrations, and had many clients including: Budweiser, Hallmark Cards, Avon, Land-O-Lakes, Time-Life, *Black Enterprise*, Hasbro, McGraw-Hill, Harcourt, and Highlights for Children. Notwithstanding his three Coretta Scott King Awards, ten ALA Notable NAACP Image Awards, and many more, Floyd's mission to "give kids a positive alternative to counteract the negative impact of what is conveyed in today's media" was most admirable. At age three, Floyd Cooper began drawing on pieces of plasterboard left over from his father's work as a builder. He drew constantly after that, even on his math and reading worksheets in school. After getting his college degree in fine art, Cooper got a job creating art for a greeting card company. But he dreamed of being an illustrator in New York City, and, with the encouragement of the artist Mark English, he moved there. After some rejections, he got a book manuscript to illustrate. Only later did Cooper find out that the book, *Grandpa's Face*, was written by Eloise Greenfield, a well-known children's writer. Cooper's illustrations brought him notoriety that has continued today. The technique Cooper used is called oil wash on board. He painted an illustration board with oil print, and then with a stretchy eraser, he erased the paint to make a picture. He called this method of painting a "subtractive process," which renders his illustrations easily recognizable to any fan. Floyd Cooper said, "My personal goal is to take the reader on a journey into the story, to get a sense of smells, the atmosphere, and the emotions conveyed by the characters." Floyd Cooper designed the seventh stamp design issued by the USPS in celebration of Kwanzaa, issued October 10, 2018. Cooper died on July 16, 2021, in Easton, Pennsylvania.



JERRY PINKNEY was born December 22, 1939, in the Germantown section of Philadelphia and began drawing at the age of four. As a child, he had great difficulty with dyslexia in elementary school. However, his love of and talent for drawing was useful in elevating his self-esteem and gaining the attention of his teachers and fellow classmates. In junior high school his work was noticed by cartoonist John Liney, who encouraged him to pursue the career of an artist. Pinkney began his career in the art department of a Boston greeting card company but soon became acquainted with the publishing industry, which sought and nurtured his work. Celebrated for his luminous narrative paintings that provide historical accuracy, he received a Caldecott Honor citation five times, the Coretta Scott King Award five times, four *New York Times* Best Illustrated Awards, four Gold and four Silver medals from the Society of Illustrators, and the *Boston Globe*-Horn Book Award. In 2000, he was given the Virginia Hamilton Literary award from Kent State University, and in 2004, the University of Southern Mississippi Medallion for outstanding contributions in the field of children's literature; Pinkney was the illustrator of more than 80 children's books. He also created images for such diverse clients as *Time*, *National Geographic*, NASA, the Franklin Mint, The National Parks Service, and General Mills. His United States postage stamps designs include the earliest issues of the Black Heritage series celebrating African-American achievement: Harriet Tubman, Martin Luther King Jr., Benjamin Banneker, Whitney Moore Young, Jackie Robinson, Scott Joplin, Carter G. Woodson, Mary McLeod Bethune, and Sojourner Truth. Pinkney typically included a second element in his designs to provide historical context. A member of the Citizens' Stamp Advisory Committee from 1982 to 1992, he has also served on the U. S. Postal Service Quality Assurance Committee. Pinkney was ESPER's featured speaker at World Stamp Show—NY 2016. Jerry Pinkney died October 20, 2021, in Sleepy Hollow, New York.



LLOYD G. MCNEILL, born April 12, 1935, in Washington, D. C., was a Jazz flutist and visual artist based in New York City. Having studied Art and Zoology at Morehouse College, Atlanta, he moved on to be the first recipient of Howard University's MFA degree in 1963. In 1964-5, he did further study in lithography at Paris' L'Ecole Nationale Des Beaux Arts. During his residence in France, he spent a considerable amount of time with Pablo Picasso and his wife, Jacqueline, in Cannes. He has also studied music composition privately with the composer Hale Smith, music theory and flute technique with the jazz musician Eric Dolphy, and classical flute technique and repertoire with Harold Jones. McNeill taught at several institutes of higher education and was Professor Emeritus of Mason Gross School of the Arts, at Rutgers University, New Jersey, having retired in 2001. Through the 1970s, and in addition to his position in Art, McNeill also taught Afro-American Music History, gave private flute lessons, and was instrumental in launching the Jazz Studies Program at Rutgers University. McNeill also exhibited his paintings and drawings at several galleries and colleges in the U. S. Northeast. He published two volumes of poems -- *Blackline: A Collection of Poems, Drawings, and Photographs* and *After the Rain: A Collection of New Poems*. In 2007, Lloyd G. McNeill was chosen by the USPS to design a postage stamp for the celebration of Kwanzaa. The stamp was issued October 9, 2009. McNeill died on November 5, 2021, in New York City.