



# News Release

## Chamber of Commerce

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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PHOENIX -- A collection of specially commissioned portraits of historic Arizona leaders was unveiled today as part of the 20th anniversary commemoration of Chris-Town Shopping Center, the nation's first enclosed shopping mall.

The portraits, by Roger Whitney, a well-known Phoenix artist, were commissioned by Chris-Town merchants and have received the endorsement of the Arizona Department of Education. The Central Arizona Museum cooperated in the selection of the subjects and assisted with research in order to portray each subject as accurately as possible.

Joan Lake, Chris-Town general manager, announced the portraits would be on public display at the shopping center from August 24 through September 30, 1981. In addition, reproductions of the portraits and biographies of each subject will be distributed to every school in Arizona, according to Lake.

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"Chris-Town is proud to have commissioned this project, and we hope that this will provide a better understanding for everyone -- especially students -- of the contributions made by early leaders in fashioning a raw wilderness into this dynamic state. We are proud too, to have the services of Roger Whitney who has made many contributions in portraying local and national sports figures," said Mrs. Lake.

Called "Arizona Heritage: A Commemorative Portrait Collection," the series portrays subjects spanning a period in the state's history of more than 200 years. Included are leaders from the fields of education, agriculture, politics, religion, the military and several representatives from Indian cultures.

Each portrait was executed in oil pencil and is a composite of the individual and subjects which graphically depict the contributions made, according to Whitney. "I am especially indebted to the Central Arizona Museum's research which ensured not only authenticity, but that the first twenty subjects we selected provided a representative cross section of the pioneers who were instrumental in setting the future course of Arizona," he said.

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Lake also announced that reproductions of the series would be available to the public at a nominal charge, and a larger format, limited edition series of the portraits -- signed and numbered -- would also be available for purchase. Proceeds from the sale of the limited editions will be used for the Chris-Town Arizona Heritage Scholarship Fund.

The selection of the commemorative collection as the focal point for Chris-Town's 20th anniversary relates to the shopping center's role as a pioneer in the development of shopping centers. As the first fully-enclosed shopping mall, Chris-Town opened August 24, 1961 on a former alfalfa field. Today it has 1.2 million square feet of leased space, double its original size. The shopping center has been designated as the core of Urban Village Four in Phoenix's master plan for growth, Concept 2000.

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