



Biography - Terrie McComb

My formal education in art started much later in life than for most. I earned a BS in Industrial Engineering many years ago, which led to an enjoyable and successful career working in engineering and information technology for over 40 years. But art was always my primary “go to” for fun and relaxation. Nature was typically the subject, having grown up in a family of gardeners, bird watchers, farmers, and campers. Redouté prints hung on our walls and seed catalogs replaced novels as the dominant wintertime reading of choice. Wildlife of all sizes were welcomed and celebrated in our yard, unless the dog got the final vote.

When I moved from southern California to the Chicago area for a new job in 2011, I discovered the Morton Arboretum as a wonderful place to enjoy the beauty of all four seasons. Having always been inspired by botanical illustrations, I was delighted to find that classes were offered. My goal was to learn to paint beautiful flowers with watercolor. But enrollment in the watercolor class required completion of other classes in pencil, colored pencil, and pen & ink. So I jumped in with both feet and took them all... and many more!

I earned a certificate in Botanical Art & Illustration for the Morton Arboretum in 2015. With all those classes and even more, I learned a lot. Primarily, that watercolor was really not for me. As stunning as it is when done well, it is persnickety and hard to control. I discovered I preferred colored pencil instead. It can be maddening in its own way sometimes, but I find a lot of grace in blending many layers of color to build depth and brilliance over time. It is centering for me and gives me time to get to know the specimens in detail - maybe even o fall in love with them. I do enjoy dabbling in other media, such as graphite, pen & ink, watercolor pencils, block printing, collage and fiber arts too. There is always something to learn in every class, and with every experimental piece, that makes whatever art I create better. Having retired in the fall of 2025, I look forward to devoting more time to discovery of the plants and animals in the woods and prairies around us, and to capturing their wondrous secrets in new works of art.