Back Tracking

by Max Greiner Jr.

This column provides historical look back at the life of an American artist.

Years:1951-1957 (Age 0 to 6)

This **"Back Tracking"** column will take a look back at my creative life, from the very beginning to the present. If you have ever wondered if artists are "born" or "made", this column may eventually answer the question for you, as I share my own story.

After graduation from the **Architecture College** at **Texas A&M University** in 1974, Alan Stacell, the head of the **Environmental Design** program told me that I had as much natural, artistic talent as God had ever given anyone. However, he then said it was up to me as to what I would do with this talent, during my lifetime. Professor, Rodney Hill also gave me the same encouragement, using different words. These two college professors, more than any others, inspired me to not waste the natural talent that God had given me. I will forever be grateful to them for this encouragement, at a critical time in my life.

However, this story actually starts on an Air Force base in Warner Robins, GA, on December 16, 1951. Yes, I was actually born as a little baby, and did not come here from another planet, as some people think! I heard from a stranger, who after reading my testimony on our website, said that I was a *"Mutant for Christ!"* I think that was a complement?

Max Jr., (age 3), with his dad and a big bass caught in his grandfather's pond in Houston.

I was the first-born child, of what would eventually be four children, born to Max G. Greiner and Bobbie Sue (Cain) Greiner. My father was in the service at the time, having graduated from **Texas A&M University**, with a business degree. My dad was a famous **Aggie** football star, who lettered all four years at **TAMU**. He garnered the respect of many people throughout his life because of his positive spirit and tenacity. After completing his time in the service, my parents moved back to Houston, and then Beaumont, TX, where my dad entered the financial profession. He would accomplish much good during his lifetime.

I was greatly blessed to have wonderful, Godly parents. Only after I was grown, did I realize how blessed I was. I later learned that not all children have loving parents, who encourage and nurture them.

Max Jr., (age 4), holds his first Bible before church, in Beaumont Texas.

Mom and Dad also introduced me to God. My first church was **Calder Baptist Church** in Beaumont, TX. My "spiritual roots" are **Southern Baptist**, going back at least four generations, on both sides of my family.

My parents told me, that as a very young child, I was always able to entertain myself, when there was no one

else to play with! I can remember that my favorite toys were building blocks, *"Lincoln Logs"*®, clay and water based paints. I got a football and baseball, but never really figured out what to do with them!

Max Jr. (age 5) and his younger sister, Carol Sue, celebrated Christmas in 1956 with their new little brother, Mark Stephen.

Thankfully, I had the type of parents who encouraged their children to pursue their own natural gifts and interests. They exposed us to many good things, but ultimately let us follow our natural paths. This is what a young artist needs to thrive, and I thank God for parents that created this healthy environment for me and my siblings.