

# PRESS RELEASE

## *For immediate release*

Caption Jane Hudson: Caracaras by Jane Hudson

Caption Teri Mills: Roseate Spoonbill by Teri Mills

## **‘Ding’ Darling to host Audubon-inspired art exhibition**

From March 1 through April 30, 2017, a group of fine local artists will display their works at the J.N. “Ding” Darling Wildlife Refuge Visitor & Education Center on Sanibel Island. The “Audubon Inspiration” exhibit is curated by Cello Bennett, widow of the late artist Gale Bennett (1939-2008), along with artists Marcy Calkins and Jane Hudson.

Before his death in 2008, Bennett, a local artist with an international reputation, taught for 40 years at art centers in the area. He was planning a series of paintings inspired by the works of famed bird artist John James Audubon.

“Unfortunately Gale did not live long enough to do this project,” said his wife. “Almost all of the painters preparing the works for the Audubon exhibit... were students of his.” The “Inspiration” group includes Calkins, Pat Dunn, Jane Geronime, Marilyn Hedlund, Sheila Hoen, Hudson, Teri Mills, Caroline Nuckolls, and Alicia Schmidt.

“The idea was to use Audubon’s masterpieces as a jumping-off point for original new works depicting birds of North America,” adds Bennett. “I am confident Gale would have been thrilled to see his idea carried out by such an accomplished group of artists.”

Visitors can view “Audubon Inspirations” in the Refuge Visitor & Education Center auditorium every day (except some holidays) from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Since the refuge also uses the auditorium for other events, staff advises visitors to call 239-472-1100 when planning a visit.

For further information:

DDWS Contact: Chelle Koster Walton  
239-699-4754  
ChelleTrav@aol.com

Artists Contacts:

Marcy Calkins 815-519-8366  
Jane Hudson 239-466-0244

## ABOUT DDWS

As a non-profit 501(c)3 organization, DDWS works to support J.N. “Ding” Darling National Wildlife Refuge’s mission of conservation, wildlife and habitat protection, research, and public education through charitable donations and Refuge Nature Shop proceeds.

To support DDWS and the refuge with a tax-deductible gift, visit [dingdarlingsociety.org](http://dingdarlingsociety.org) or contact Birgie Miller at 239-292-0566 or [director@dingdarlingsociety.org](mailto:director@dingdarlingsociety.org).

###