

Wisconsin Historical Society: Receives former Bank Mutual's Max Fernekes art collection

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MADISON, Wis. – The Wisconsin Historical Society announced today that Associated Bank has donated more than 90 paintings by Max Fernekes, the late, Milwaukee-born artist to the Society's collection. The paintings were among the assets obtained by Associated Bank through the acquisition of Bank Mutual earlier this summer.

Over several decades, Michael T. Crowley, Sr., the late former chief executive officer of Bank Mutual, collected the paintings, which were displayed throughout Bank Mutual's corporate headquarters.

"I am pleased to see that my father's lifelong passion of collecting the work of Wisconsin artist, Max Fernekes, will be shared with the public through this donation to the Wisconsin Historical Society," said Michael T. Crowley, Jr., former chairman of Bank Mutual Corporation and current Associated Bank board member.

The collection of Fernekes' artwork spans five decades and features unique Wisconsin scenes from 1930's urban Milwaukee to rural, rolling hills and historic landmarks. Fernekes was born in 1905 and became deeply rooted in the Milwaukee community. He then moved his family to Mineral Point in 1940 and spent the last 44 years of his life there.

“Max Fernekes was an important Wisconsin artist who, through his art, documented historic Wisconsin landmarks, buildings and vistas especially in Milwaukee and Mineral Point of his time,” said Christian Overland, The Ruth and Hartley Barker Director, Wisconsin Historical Society. “An article in the most recent issue of Wisconsin Magazine of History, documents Max and Ava Fernekes’ important visual legacy to the Mineral Point community, and with this generous donation of Fernekes’ paintings from Associated Bank, we can continue to preserve, document and share the stories of Max Fernekes’ artistic career and the changing face of the communities shown in his paintings with the people of Wisconsin and beyond.”

“As Associated Bank celebrates 157 years in business this year, we understand the importance of preserving history and are proud to help Bank Mutual, the Crowley family and Mr. Fernekes preserve this part of their history,” said David Stein, executive vice president and head of consumer and business banking, Associated Bank.