

# GENTLING

18 December 2001

Dear Ted,

You can have no idea how many times I have tried to write an effective and proper apology to convince you how genuinely sorry I am for upsetting you. It was clearly my aim to get your attention, but I thought that my candor would not damage our friendship which clearly it has. Whatever happens to you and us, Ted, I value our friendship over and above any business relationship. As for distrust? Nothing could be farther from the truth. You have always had our complete trust and goodwill and will continue to have them if you wish.

It is impossible, however, to ignore the genuine problems that resulted in the exhibition last week that was such a departure from the kind of show we had agreed upon last summer. I can tell you that, had I known that you wanted to mount a larger exhibition, Scott and I would have prepared for it quite differently. All of this could have been prevented if I had participated more actively in the planning process and we had maintained better communications.

You may not believe me, but Scott and I are not micro-managers. I personally have little enough time for painting these days; I have no interest in meddling in your business. It is my fervent hope to some day have a good gallery with a national reputation and access to clients and venues throughout the United States and abroad. I believe that I have it with Pillsbury-Peters. It is my deepest hope that you will eventually relieve me of the day-to-day burden of private dealing so that I can pay more attention to creating my art while I am in my prime. I really believe that the problems which exist between us, Ted, can be solved to our mutual benefit. If I did not believe this, I would not now be trying to fix the situation.

Scott and I do not want to quit your gallery, and we don't want to be thrown out - especially so early in the life of Pillsbury-Peters when such a bright and promising future looms for all of us. Over 90% of all our past exhibitions have been sellouts or near sellouts, a exceptional record matched by few area artists, and our prices when adjusted for inflation were not too different from those of our paintings now hanging at your gallery.

Please tell me that we can join together to make our relationship work as it should. I know that we can be a major asset to Pillsbury-Peters. Though not widely known outside of Texas, we are considered by some very important people in the art world to be at the top of our kind of painting. Many have expressed amazement that we have not become better known. I believe that we offer you and your gallery a unique opportunity to promote us nationally as Andrew Wyeth at age 84 moves toward the end of his career, and Jamie Wyeth continues to create work of questionable quality.

When the University of Texas debuts our next book, "GENTLINGS, From Time to Time" in two years, and if it is

anywhere close to selling as successfully as our current bird book, the public will get to see for the first time how closely our various artistic interests are connected. You know how much Scott and I want you to be a part of that book. If you participate, you are bound to learn more about us, and that can only help you in promoting us.

In your gallery of art superstars, I know that Scott and I are not very high in the pecking order. We can never expect to be, if we don't perform as far as sales are concerned. I only wish I could erase my last letter to you and erase our exhibit as well. Scott and I can put them behind us if you can, Ted. I just know that we can have an exciting future for us all if you join with us in a genuine partnership based on our long-held mutual respect and perhaps a deeper mutual understanding. If you agree, then let us begin again.

As for my letter, perhaps the persian poet said it best when he wrote:

The moving finger writes,  
and having writ, moves on.  
Nor all thy piety nor wit  
can lure it back ~~again~~  
to cancel half a line,  
Nor all thy tears wash out  
a word of it.

Sincerely,

Stuart Gentling