

STUART W. GENTLING

13 March 1983

Dear Pete,

I have just returned from San Antonio where I have been for the last week attending the Game Conservation International Conference (Game Coin). This convention is attended by wildlife painters and art dealers from all over the world, and I made the most of the opportunity to meet and talk with them. More about this later in another letter. My main reason for going to San Antonio, however, was to meet and talk with Jack Maguire at the Institute of Texan Cultures. We had a difficult time setting up an appointment that did not conflict with either of our schedules, and because of this, I was beginning to feel somewhat apprehensive, thinking that perhaps Maguire had cooled somewhat as far as the Bird Book was concerned. I was beginning to wonder if I had imagined our conversation and the enthusiasm that Maguire had expressed at our previous meeting in Austin.

As it turned out Marilyn and I should not have worried. We were greeted with great warmth and hospitality when we finally arrived at the Institute. Jack Maguire personally conducted us on a grand tour of the building which is a huge structure simply jammed with throngs of people there to view the exhibits. It is an excellent place to show pictures, but Marilyn and I were not there just to look at their marvelous facilities. We had come to get, if possible, an absolute confirmation of the Institute's interest in our project, the extent of that interest, and to get a commitment to a general time schedule for our participation. We succeeded in confirming all of these with a show to open at the Institute in October 1985 and run until January 1986 the beginning of the Sesquicentennial year when not one but three separate exhibitions would travel throughout the State. One exhibition would be composed of the originals and would be scheduled for the major cities while two smaller shows composed of prints only would tour the smaller towns. Jack said that he wanted to throw the full resources of the Institute behind the project but that I would have full control over the production and design of the book. He said that we could use their mailing facilities and their cabinet men to make the fancy boxes for the book if there were no legal conflict in their state charter. He also said

STUART W. GENTLING

-2-

that they would like to print up a large poster several months in advance of the show and that the Institute would handle all the book sales (from selling to shipping) and promotional advertising and publicity. He added that while he would like the Institute to handle all of the sales that I would be free to handle as many sales myself as I preferred since I already have many previous commitments.

OK
This is a most generous offer, Pete, and though it may cost me a chunk of my profits, it will insure that this book, the first of several that Scott and I have planned, will be famous historically and because it will sell out quickly, it will gain us a certain amount of fame and make an impact upon the rare book buying world with a stunning commercial debut that should carry over to our future book projects practically insuring their success. We shook hands only on the time commitment for the show and the traveling exhibitions. I carefully avoided talking percentages until I could return home and confer with Scott and my attorneys about just how much we were willing to give up to take advantage of this golden opportunity. As the project stands now the book and the initial prints will bring in a minimum of \$3,350,000. The book production will cost in the neighborhood of \$350,000. That would leave about \$3,000,000 to be divided between the Institute, Scott, John Graves, and myself. David Holman is going to be paid a flat fee. I do not believe that the Institute will ask for more than 25%, since I will be paying for the Institute's cabinet work. If they do take 25%, then that coupled with John Grave's percentage (5% of all net revenues up to sales of \$750,000, then 7.5% of all net revenues above that amount) would leave Scott and me with slightly over \$2,000,000 from which attorney's fees, accountants' fees, taxes would be deducted.

I have a couple of very good tax lawyers-accountants available to me who have handled Marilyn Maxwell's multi-million dollar estate and have made her much, much richer. I have talked with them several times. They are conservative by nature, but they love this book project because it is so unusual and differs so markedly from their usual estate projects. They also love our printings. As the project begins to assume its final form and schedule they will be primed to handle what may well be a tidal wave of profits, to place as many of these funds as possible into solid conservative investments and thus hopefully cut

STUART W. GENTLING

-3-

of the reach of taxation. These people all believe that Scott and I may be made millionaires literally overnight, and they are preparing themselves to handle such a great sum within a single tax year. By the way, the scenario that I have just given you is the worst possible case. This would occur only if the Institute handled all sales themselves. I have already sold about 140 books myself, and I plan to sell a great deal more. Sometimes I have to stop to review for myself the immensity of this enterprise, the work to be done, the legal and professional responsibilities and the fact that there is involved vast sums of money, both in costs and in profits, whose amounts are literally abstractions, so difficult are they to comprehend.

The gallery is really looking beautiful. I have been photographing it as the work proceeds, and I will send you a whole range of slides as soon as the exterior is finished which will be soon. Give me a call when you return and I will fill you in on all the details. Give my love to everybody. I hope that you didn't get too wet out on the coast.

Yours -
Stuart