

**T. BOONE PICKENS**

# **2022 LIFETIME SPORTSMAN AWARD.**

**WALTER MATIA**

Regarded by many as the greatest living sporting art sculptor, Walter Matia got an early start at paying attention to creatures that soar, crawl, and hide in the grass. He was raised near a wooded park in a Cleveland suburb and his boyhood days were filled with "bird-watching, botanizing, log flipping, and collecting." As an avid duck hunter, he has experienced "a lifetime of icy mornings, blistered feet, mosquitoes, torrid afternoons, chapped hands, wonderful dinners and the companionship of great and knowledgeable friends" all of which he eventually translates into his art. Walter was educated at Williams College in Massachusetts, where he earned degrees in Biology and Art Design. Much of his early training was attained during a long apprenticeship in the Exhibits Department of the Cleveland Museum of Natural History.

After leaving the Cleveland Museum, Walter satisfied his passion for conservation by working with the Nature Conservancy where he spent eleven years, eventually as vice-president in charge of land management. He often visited unusual ecosystems in the company of some of the country's best naturalists.

Walter began casting bronze sculptures in 1980, initially concentrating on bird life, and over the years working on sporting dogs and other mammals. In 1989, the Blair House Restoration Committee placed one of his fountains in the formal garden of the President of the United States Guest House. Among Walter's larger-than-life-size commissions is the bull logo of the Merrill Lynch Corporation headquartered in New York City and the Spanish fighting bulls in front of NRG Stadium, home of the Houston Texans.

PCQC members will recognize that the T. Boone Pickens Lifetime Sportsman Award sculpture was created and is donated by Walter each year. Walter also creates a unique annual medallion for our sponsors and donors. He has consistently donated a live auction item and attended each dinner. His works grace the homes of numerous PCQC patrons. Walter has a setter named 'Pip' and enjoys West Texas quail hunts at every opportunity.

Renowned outdoor writer Tom Davis described Walter's art best: "When you study a Walter Matia sculpture, it dawns on you, perhaps not all at once but at some point, that you are in the presence of uncommon mastery. There is nothing accidental; everything is there for a reason, and so is everything that is not. Someone described Walter's work as having a "labored intensity," and I keep coming back to that. This is serious, even challenging art that is rooted in the authentic experience of the outdoors and speaks powerfully and eloquently to the sensibilities of sportsmen."

Walter is a Fellow of the National Sculpture Society and has received the organizations Gold, Silver, and Bronze medals at their annual Members Exhibitions. He has been awarded the James Earl Fraser Award for best sculpture three times and the General Pittman Award for Wildlife three times by the Prix de West Art Show at the National Cowboy and Western Heritage Center. In 2013, he was honored with the Masters of the American West Purchase Award by the Autry Museum in Los Angeles CA. In 2008, he was honored by the Leigh Yawkey Woodson Art Museum as a Master Wildlife Artist.

Walter's work is featured at the Southeastern Wildlife Exposition Charleston, SC; Society of Animal Artists Annual Exhibition; National Museum of Wildlife Art Jackson, WY; The Prix de West Invitational National Cowboy and Western Heritage Museum Oklahoma City, OK and the Masters of the American West Los Angeles, CA. The Bird Dog Hall of Fame Grand Junction, Tennessee features his life size English Springer Spaniel commissioned by the English Springer Spaniel Field Trial Association. The American Kennel Club Museum in New York City, NY commissioned his life size Airdale "Blue" mascot of the Blue Buffalo Pet Food Corporation. In 2021, Walter is being honored with a personal exhibit at the National Sporting Library & Museum Middleburg, VA through February 2022.

