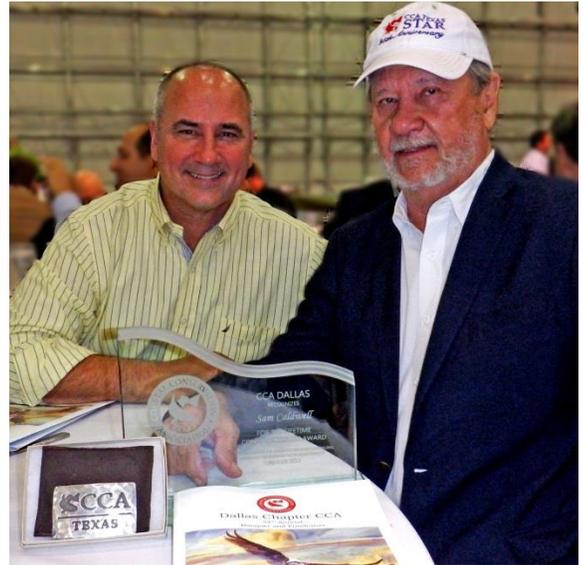


Hello, Dallas.

It's an honor to be included with Gary Lumas, Gregg Stunz and Lefty Kreh as a CCA Dallas Conservationist of the Year. Reminds me that back in 1977, when I was recruited by Ben Kocian and Walter Fondren as a new member of the GCCA, I said, "Yesterday, I couldn't spell conservationist, and today, I am one."



*Richard Pratt has great taste in art.  
He won my Dallas painting,  
"Greater Fish Hawks."*

I'm a good old Houston Boy. Go, Texans. Well... maybe next year. But I wouldn't be standing here right now if it weren't for the good folks of Dallas. You have supported a fine children's hospital for more than 80 years.

When I was about 10 years old, I was wheeled into the Dallas Crippled Children's Hospital with a shotgun-shattered leg. It wasn't clear whether I would leave with two legs, but a year later, thanks to the good doctors and caregivers, I walked out of that hospital on two fairly good legs and have been running, hunting and fishing ever since.

Incidentally, that Dallas Crippled Children's hospital has become the world-class Scottish Rite Children's hospital. If you haven't been there, go by. Make a donation. Tell 'em Sam Caldwell sent you.

While I was getting my leg back in that fine Dallas hospital, I also became a reader, writer and artist. Back then, there wasn't much in that hospital for a kid who wanted to be outdoors to do, but they had a good library. The nurse-librarian claimed I read every book there-- twice. And, she encouraged me to keep a journal. Of course, I made up outdoor stories. A Dallas art teacher came by several times, and brought a slide show, magnificent art of the Old Masters and the Impressionists-- but she also

included three American artists. I liked the Americans best of all, because they painted images of where I wanted to be-- outdoors, hunting and fishing.

Thanks, Dallas, 1948.

A few years later, when I entered the Fine Art College at the University of Houston—Eat 'em up, Coogs—I already knew the work of a lot of the artists. Van Gogh, Gauguin, Picasso—but there were those three American painters—Frederick Remington, Charlie Russell and Winslow Homer.

I liked the European fine art, but it seemed to me that the finest works of all were the powerful images of those American artists. I didn't know it, but that's what I decided to do back there in that Dallas children's hospital—write outdoor stories and paint outdoor pictures. I've been doing the best I can ever since.

Outdoor kids-- One of my proudest moments was when the GCCA began the NewTide Kid's program in 1982. Today, the Dallas CCA can be proud of the StarKid and StarTeen programs that allow a kid to catch a gafftop catfish, or a sheephead, or a flounder or speckled trout, and win a \$50,000 college scholarship. To date, STAR kids have won more than \$5,230,000 in scholarships. And, if not a scholarship, the kids win a valuable appreciation for being in the outdoors.

Tonight, standing here on two fairly good legs, I have to say that there are people who deserve this honor more than I do. But, I'm gonna keep it.

Thank you, Dallas 2015. –**Sam Caldwell**