

# Life and Art



Joella arriving at ASC in 1951

## *Go Southwest Young Woman*

Joella Jean Mahoney arrived in Flagstaff in 1951 to study at Arizona State College, now Northern Arizona University. Having grown up in Chicago and then the San Francisco Bay Area in California, Mahoney was in awe of the beautiful vistas and wide open landscapes of the Colorado Plateau.

“Being in Flagstaff, Arizona, was like going to heaven for me. I was enthralled with the beauty of the landscape, the dramatic weather, the wonder of the Native American cultures, and the stimulation of being in college. Each day seemed more magical than the last!”

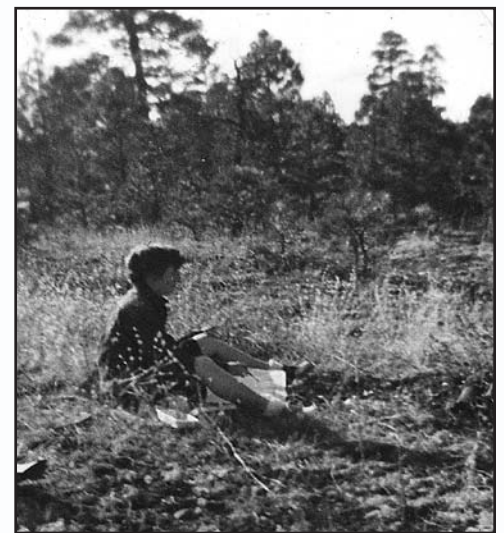


Old Main building

## *An Artist Is Born*

Mahoney majored in art and had many opportunities to paint the awe-inspiring landscapes that surrounded Flagstaff.

“I always painted outdoors. Here I am in 1953, painting a full-sheet watercolor of the ponderosa pines just south of campus where the Student Union is now located. The land was untouched and provided a lovely, gentle terrain for painting, with large trees, meadows, and a peak view.



Joella plein air painting

“Our art professor, John R. Salter, encouraged us to work directly from nature. He always reminded us that ‘Painting is more than reporting what you see.’”

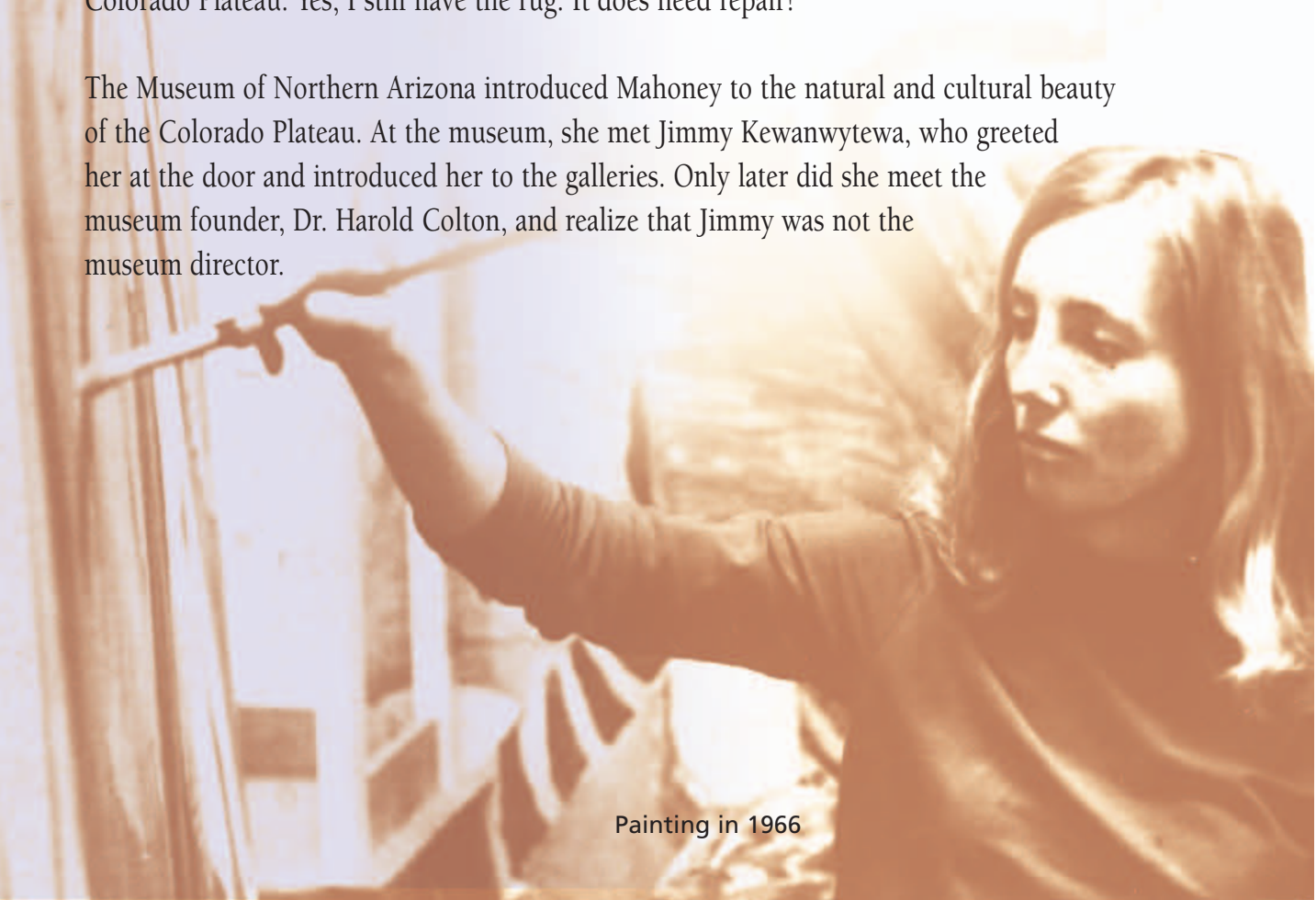


Mahoney with her first Navajo rug

## *Getting to Know the Colorado Plateau*

“In October of 1958 I was standing in the golden afternoon sun in the Moenkopi Wash north of Cameron, holding up my first Navajo rug. My pals and I had been exploring the Navajo Reservation. After Tuba City, the pavement ended. I felt a sense of loss when roads began to be paved. This picture captures my joy at being a part of ‘the West’ on the Colorado Plateau. Yes, I still have the rug. It does need repair!”

The Museum of Northern Arizona introduced Mahoney to the natural and cultural beauty of the Colorado Plateau. At the museum, she met Jimmy Kewanwytewa, who greeted her at the door and introduced her to the galleries. Only later did she meet the museum founder, Dr. Harold Colton, and realize that Jimmy was not the museum director.



Painting in 1966

# Evolve in Harmony

## *Into the Wild Blue Yonder*



Joella hiking at the Grand Canyon

Through the 1970s and 80s, Mahoney continued to develop her unique style and themes while immersing herself in the cultural and natural heritage of the plateau.

“Hiking in the Grand Canyon opened up paradise to me. Around every corner was a wondrous view of ‘forever’ time. The pastel evening light at the bottom soothed my senses and muscles, as did the continuous rhythmic sound of the flowing Colorado River as it slipped by the campground.

“Hiking out along the Tonto Platform to the Bright Angel Trail was more paradise. It was a fragile, fleeting springtime when little rivulets of seeping water crossed the trail. The platform was strewn with a light mantle of yellow and white flowers.

“The South Rim remains my first love. No matter how crowded it is now, I still love to be there, remembering the more untouched time of fifty years ago and soaking up the endless beauty and mystery that, for me, will always abide there.”

## *Called by the Canyon*

Through the 1990s, Mahoney continued to explore the Grand Canyon and surrounding landscapes. On this 1996 rafting trip, she had the opportunity to develop her unique style and themes, while immersing herself in the cultural and natural heritage of the plateau. She was fascinated by the ethereal light on carved rock and deep blue waters.

“The sensuality of the landscape is expressed in complex musical rhythms. The reflective surface of still water has always represented the realm of the ideal, because what is reflected is pure illusion.”



Sitting next to the pool at North Canyon

## *Into the New Millennium*

“There are endless landscape compositions in the complex Sedona landscape. Here is a microcosm of Colorado Plateau colors and geological formations. I enjoy the challenge of painting outdoors. It forces me to concentrate on shapes, colors, textures, and values, in order to capture, in paint, a particular place.

“Painting outdoors is a challenge, because one deals with the terrain and weather as well as the complexities of the subject matter. The visual landscape is extremely complex, when one takes the time to look at it closely and analytically.”

Joella in her studio