

DISTINGUISHED
ALUMNUS
OF THE YEAR

MR. DON
CROOK

The YVCC Alumni Association is proud to honor Mr. Donald Crook as 2003 Distinguished Alumnus of the Year. Mr. Crook is a Yakima artist and graphic designer whose talent as a painter was learned "right there at YVCC, from art instructor, Gaylen Hanson," Mr. Crook explained. During his studies at Yakima Valley Junior College (1955-1957), Mr. Crook began demonstrating the talents that would later become his career by creating the realistic portrait of a Yakama Indian that was used to represent the college mascot until the adoption of the Yak in 1997. Mr. Crook also played football while attending college.

Mr. Crook has been the graphic artist at the Kwik Lok Corporation in Yakima since 1969, but his "part-time" job, according to co-worker Ms. Marsha Robertson, is done in his studio in the home of his basement. "After working an 8-hour day as a graphic artist...he starts painting shortly after 5:00 p.m. and paints straight through until 11:00 p.m., only stopping a short time to eat dinner," she explains.



Mr. Crook's dedication to his craft is surpassed only by his accurate historical portrayal of his subjects. He studies for hours before his paintbrush even touches a canvas, often traveling to remote locations to study an area and take pictures, researching materials in museums, studying old photos, and hearing first-person accounts.

Since his days at Yakima Valley Junior College, Mr. Crook's renown as an historical artist has grown significantly. He has several pieces on display in the Yakima Valley Museum and has received many awards in juried art competitions around the Northwest. Several years ago, he was commissioned to paint a series of works documenting the history of the Hanford White Bluffs region of Washington state. He has painted a series on the Civil War, as well as a number of western theme murals in Ellensburg and Toppenish.

Mr. Crook's greatest career accomplishment was achieved in March, 2003 when he was awarded Best of Show and the \$10,000 top prize at the Journey's End National Art Exhibition in Astoria, Oregon, for his entry *In Sight of the Pacific*, a painting depicting the Lewis and Clark journey.

Mr. Crook has been described as a humble, generous donor of his work to local non-profits for fund-raisers and a devoted family man. He and his wife, Shirley, enjoy golf, attending his art shows, and spending time with their five children, 11 grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren.