

Northern Kentucky Views Presents:

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# Frank Duveneck

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## *Frank Duveneck*

*1848 - 1919*

*Artist and Educator*

Frank Duveneck was undoubtedly the most important native artist in the history of northern Kentucky and greater Cincinnati. As a Covington teenager, Duveneck's talent was obvious to Benedictine brothers whom he assisted in decorating churches in the area and eventually throughout the northeastern United States.

At 21, he went to Europe to further develop his abilities. Within a short time, he had established himself as a leader of his class, won the first of many medals for his work, and began to attract his own students.

During the next 20 years, Duveneck continued to paint and began to teach mostly in Europe. His fame continued to grow both in the United States and internationally. After the death of his wife in 1888, Duveneck returned to Covington. He declined lucrative offers from Boston, Chicago and New York. He could have gained more fame and certainly more wealth elsewhere, but while he traveled extensively, Covington remained his home.

Duveneck devoted the last 28 years of his life to teaching. While he is primarily remembered for his paintings and sculptures, in reality his true legacy is probably in his teaching. He proved to be a master teacher. In 1890, he became dean of the Cincinnati Art Academy and soon transformed it into a nationally recognized school. Students flocked to his classes from all over the east and Midwest.

Duveneck was a fatherly figure to his students. He knew how and when to give criticism and how and when to offer praise to motivate his students. Frequently, he assisted students financially and often took struggling students out for a meal. He normally took the trolley from Covington to Cincinnati three times each week, but if a student needed special attention, he didn't hesitate to go to the art academy each day.

His students revered him and remained faithful to him throughout their careers. Many artists of local and even national note were listed as his students. His appeal as a teacher rested not only on artistic technique but his teaching of an approach to life. His students branched out across a wide spectrum of art related occupations including advertising, packaging, and design and touched many fields.

His influence reached beyond the formal art school. He offered free criticism two nights each week and every Sunday morning at the Cincinnati Art Club. His influence through his students dominated the arts scene for generations. Any artist who studied with Duveneck had immediate credibility. Even today, more than 70 years after his death, his name is uttered with reverence in the local art community.

His art has provided enjoyment, enlightenment and culture for northern Kentucky for more than 100 years including displays at the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, Kenton County Public Library, Cincinnati Art Museum and numerous other temporary and permanent exhibits.

Duveneck had one child, Francis Boott Duveneck.

Nominated by Wayne Onkst, Head of Adult Services, Kenton County Library, Covington, Kentucky.

