

# ARTIST'S RENDITION

Joan Conway-Bacque's gentle, folk-art inspired images of children playing have gone from her grandchild's nursery to UNICEF cards and now to a Canada Post Christmas stamp

This year marks the 50th anniversary of the founding of the United Nations Children's Fund, better known as UNICEF. One of UNICEF's main fund raising activities is the sale of Christmas cards. There are over 160

paintings a watercolour to thank UNICEF for the help it provided to her village. This painting was reproduced and became the first UNICEF greeting card. These cards are easily recognizable by the greetings they

November 1, 1996, issue commemorating UNICEF with its annual Christmas stamp program. It commissioned three Canadian artists to produce the stamps and the booklet covers the stamps come in. All three of them also happen to design greeting cards for UNICEF.

Irish-born Joan Conway-Bacque, an Ottawa artist, with at least six UNICEF cards to her credit, created the design for the 90-cent Christmas stamp which pays the basic rate for mail sent outside Canada and the United States. She comes from a long line of talented individuals. Her grandparents carved some of the more elaborate Irish headstones at the turn of the century, her father and her uncle studied art and sculpting all over Europe and her sister is a well known Irish sculptress.

Conway-Bacque was born in Dublin, Ireland and encouraged to draw and paint at an early age. She attended the Dublin School of Art. She married a doctor and lived with him in England and the Middle East during his post-

ings with the British Army.

Settling in Canada with her husband and three children, Conway-Bacque wrote for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation and was a founding member of the now-thriving Saskatchewan Writers' Guild. Nine years ago, when she learned she was to be a grandmother, her interest in painting was rekindled and she used her talent to decorate the baby's room. Her naive style was soon in demand and what was intended as a hobby, soon became a career and she now paints full time.

work for the stamp and the booklet cover are shown below. Her granddaughter is the model for the little girl on skates on the stamp and holding the Christmas wreath in the art work. This is the child for whom she originally started painting again.

In addition to her greeting cards, Conway-Bacque has designed the 1996 UNICEF Advent Calendar and her art has been exhibited in many galleries throughout North America. Her work has been commissioned by politicians, multi-national corporations,



Joan Conway-Bacque with one of her UNICEF Christmas card designs. Bacque's art now graces a 1996 Canada Post Christmas stamp.

million cards sold worldwide each year. The initiative began in 1947 when Jitka Samkova, a seven-year-old Czechoslovakian girl,

convey in the six official languages of the United Nations.

Canada Post had the happy idea to combine its



The original design (top) was altered to suit stamp dimensions and aesthetics. The festive lamp post was removed, the skaters' hats changed, a child with sled was switched to the right hand side and even the moon and stars were changed.

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Her detailed paintings, shown on UNICEF cards were not suited to the tiny format of the stamp. She, with the other two artists, Ted Harrison (45 cents domestic rate) and Pauline Paquin (52 cent U.S. rate) rearranged elements of their initial art work to accommodate the stamp size. Their ideas came from their own childhood and from adult experience. Some of Conway-Bacque's preliminary art

hotels, museums and foreign governments and can be seen at the Ottawa Gallery in the Byward Market in downtown Ottawa.

In addition to the normal postal outlets and the National Philatelic Centre (1-800-565-4362), stamps and First Day Covers will be available at UNICEF stores throughout the country. UNICEF cards will be available from most of Canada Post's points of service. □