

Souvenirs & Mementos

As a teenager, my father, Petro Sydorenko, wanted to be a poet or a musician or a painter... Fate allowed him to become a painter. As a commercial artist, he worked for the government of the Province of Ontario. He was also a prolific portraitist and illustrator of children's books. From time to time he would pick up his mandolin and play the songs he knew or improvise his own. This collection of works is dedicated to his children: Wasyl and Halyna.

The Portrait Gallery

First row, left: Oleksander Oles (1878-1944) – one of the most beloved Ukrainian poets of the 20th century; centre: my father, Ukrainian-Canadian painter Petro Sydorenko (1926-2007) – a Holodomor survivor; right: Ukrainian poet Vasyl Symonenko (1935-1963) – repressed by Soviet authorities, his poetry remains mostly undiscovered, even today; second row, left: my father's 1974 portrait of me – a present for my birthday; centre: the sheet music cover of the first edition (1989) of the song "Zatremtily Struny" (The Strings Trembled) – designed by my father; right: my father's 1974 portrait of my sister, Halyna Sydorenko – a present for her patron saint's day.

