



**“Butterflies and Bees” by Jim Sudal has a featured place above the fireplace in Muhammad Ali’s home.**

(read the article on page 2 of this PDF file)

# Arcadia artist lands piece in Muhammad Ali's home

*By Angela Piazza*

It started with a ceramics class at the University of Arizona. It led to a commissioned mural in Muhammad Ali's living room.

Ceramic artist and Arcadia resident Jim Sudal owns and operates Jim Sudal Ceramic Design in Scottsdale.

Working out of a small studio in the back room of his shop, Sudal fills his gallery with desert-themed ceramic murals, furniture, dishware and other objects of art.

Originally from Connecticut, Sudal moved to Arizona to pursue an education in business at the UA.

In his senior year, Sudal took a ceramics course as an elective. Sudal said he always considered himself to be "artsy." After throwing his first piece on a potter's wheel he became "hooked on clay."

His appreciation of art has taken him as far as Florence, Italy to enhance his artistic depth and understanding.

Still, Sudal obtained a master's degree in business from Thunderbird American Graduate School of International Management in Glendale and moved to San Francisco to join the corporate world.

Sudal said he missed the desert after two years and moved to Phoenix where he spent eight years as a public relations marketing agent for Desert Botanical Garden.

"I was taken by the beauty of the desert," Sudal said.

While working at the garden, Sudal said developed an appreciation for the agave. The plant spends its entire life creating one bloom and dies at its maturation.

Sudal pays homage to it by making it an integral part of his art.

In the evenings after work, Sudal said he explored the art of pottery throwing. He bought a house in Arcadia with a studio in the back.

Once his hobby became self-sustaining, he left DBG and pursued his dream as a self-taught ceramic artist.

"I believe that an artist is born, not created," Sudal said.

Recently, Sudal was commissioned to do a ceramic mural for Ali and his wife Lonnie. After nine months of testing his artistic skill and patience, the 325 pound, 5-by-5 foot clay, iron, and wood mural is Sudal's "finest work," he said.

"Butterflies and Bees" features a prickly pear cactus with large blossoms. Within the cactus blossoms, Sudal layered hundreds of clay butterflies and bees as a tribute to the fighter's famous saying: "Float like a butterfly, sting like a bee."

In a thank you letter to Sudal, Lonnie Ali said the mural is inviting to guests and adds warmth to their living room.

"It (the mural) will be a family heirloom for generations to come," she wrote.

Other notable artwork by Sudal includes a mural displayed at North County Health Services in Oceanside, Calif., and pieces featured in a solo expedition sponsored by the Desert Botanical Garden.

Sudal said he looks forward to expanding his craftsmanship and gallery, displaying his artwork in public centers, such as parks, and teaching workshops.

"I will still do what I am good at," Sudal said. "But the Ali piece gave me the confidence to challenge and explore my artistic abilities."