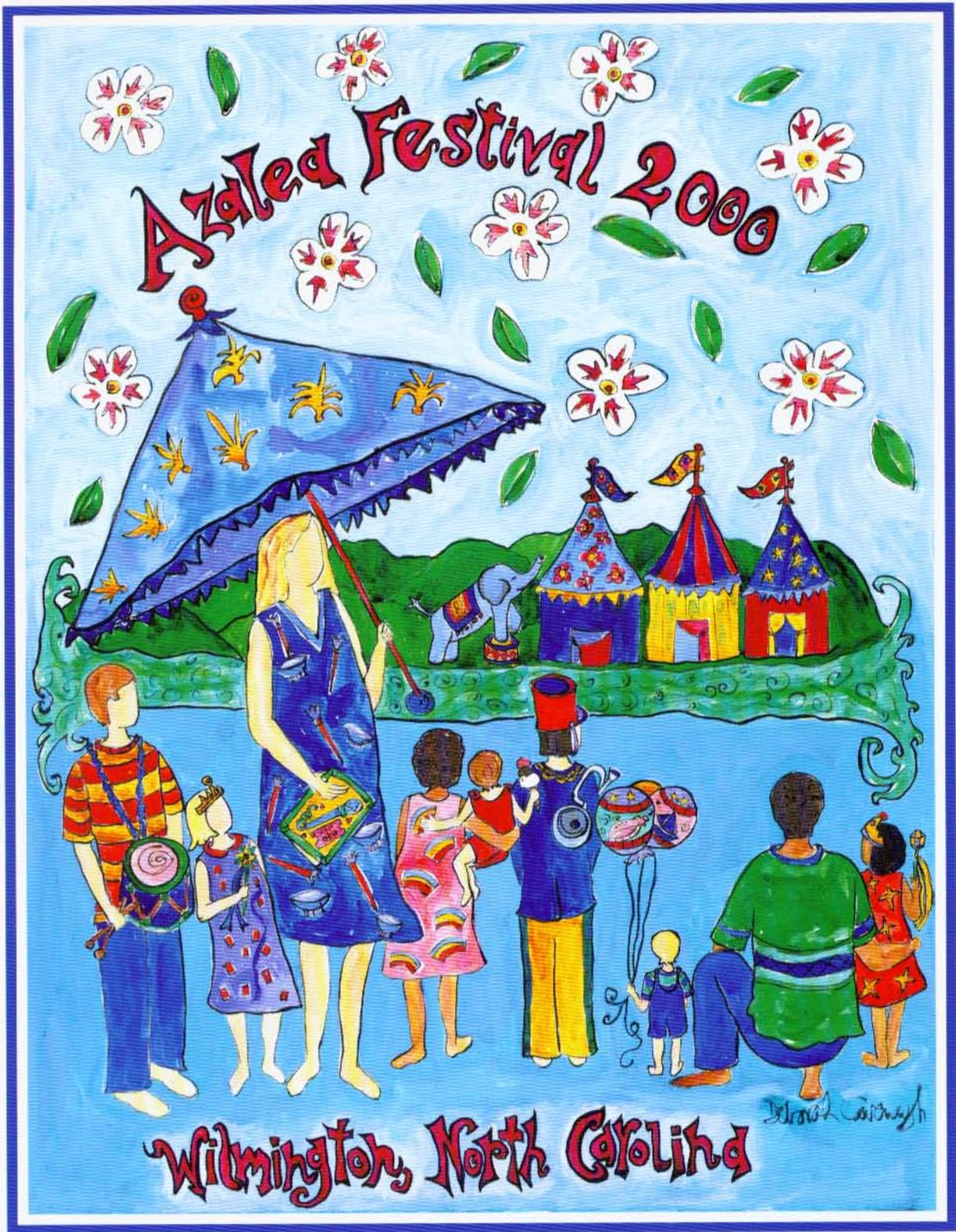


TWO DOLLARS



Fifty
Third



April 6-9, 2000



Deborah Cavanaugh

Artist Deborah Cavanaugh

Azaleas fall from the sky and fireworks burst forth from an umbrella in the 2000 North Carolina Azalea Festival art poster. Artist Deborah Cavanaugh explains that she wanted the poster to be a reflection of all the things that make the Festival the glorious celebration it is. "I don't paint from real life, but from inside my imagination. I consider the Azalea Festival to be kind of like Christmas. There's this certain morning in April when we wake up and the Azalea Festival is here, and all we have to do is choose to partake. It's a gathering of family and community." In the poster, she reflects the multigenerational, multicultural nature of the Festival through the individuals and the items around them. In painting "what's important, and what will be remembered," she selects azaleas and fireworks, colorful tents representing the circus and the street fair; the little girls wear tiaras because "in this town every little girl can grow up to be a princess."

What really makes the Azalea Festival, she says "is the gathering of the greater community just as a holiday is made special by the gathering of the family. "If everyone participates, we'll have an Azalea Festival."

Cavanaugh is a self-taught artist who began painting when her children gave her watercolors for Mother's Day, 1991. "I painted a couple of pieces just to please them." Several paintings and a divorce later, she dragged the paintings from under the bed and took them to a gallery for framing. The gallery owner signed her on the spot and quickly sold all her paintings. Simultaneously, she was asked to exhibit at Caffé Phoenix and was greatly encouraged by the result. "I thought, 'This could work.' I knew if I could paint, I could also incorporate my children into my work life." This March was the sixth year since she gave herself one year to make it as a painter.

Deborah's success has surprised even her. She has illustrated book covers and currently has an



illustrated book under consideration at Viking Press. After the sales manager for Gibson Cards purchased one of her paintings, the company selected her as one of seven artists in a line of art cards. They will be distributed in the US, UK, New Zealand and Australia and are being marketed as the works of "seven of the best-known expression artists in the country."

With works in twenty galleries and shops, her current show at Debottis Gallery in Pennsylvania received a rave review that likened her work to that of Matisse.

As to her selection as the 2000 North Carolina Azalea Festival artist, she's "very honored and pleased and happy."