

From Ken Brown...A newsletter about Calligraphy

# BrownLines™ Then & Now...

For those who have a serious love affair with beautiful letters.



I'm beginning the final paragraph of an obituary spoken at the funeral of a young neighbor boy, killed on a skateboard in front of his house. Ink on my hand? It's where I 'prime' the pen after dipping...to remove any excess. The paper was a very thick, heavy 140# watercolor stock.

Gail puts the finishing touches to the illumination she's added to the piece. Our total combined work in this design took approximately 30 hours. I confess mine was only about 20% of that. A watercolor wash gives the piece the antique parchment look. (From the March 2008 edition)



**M**any moons since our last *BrownLines*, sharing a bit of news and pictures about Calligraphy in various forms, mostly engraved on wine and spirits bottles. If you're new to my work, you'll see the many paths I've taken with a simple technique for forming beautiful

script, by hand, on a wide variety of items and surfaces.

This all began for me in Architecture 104 at Oklahoma State University in another century, long, long ago. I became fascinated with an overnight assignment in script, using a dip-pen in india ink. That was a defining moment in my life and a primary focus of my full-time work since September, 1972, when I gave up a great job in television promotion/production at WFAA TV in Dallas, TX, for full-time Calligraphy work.

From leaving tv, through 1992, the work I did, much with Gail's accompanying artwork, was done on paper. Beginning in 1970, we published reproductions of our combined art, most with sepia ink on parchment paper. Those prints were sold and shipped to arts and crafts shops all over the U.S.

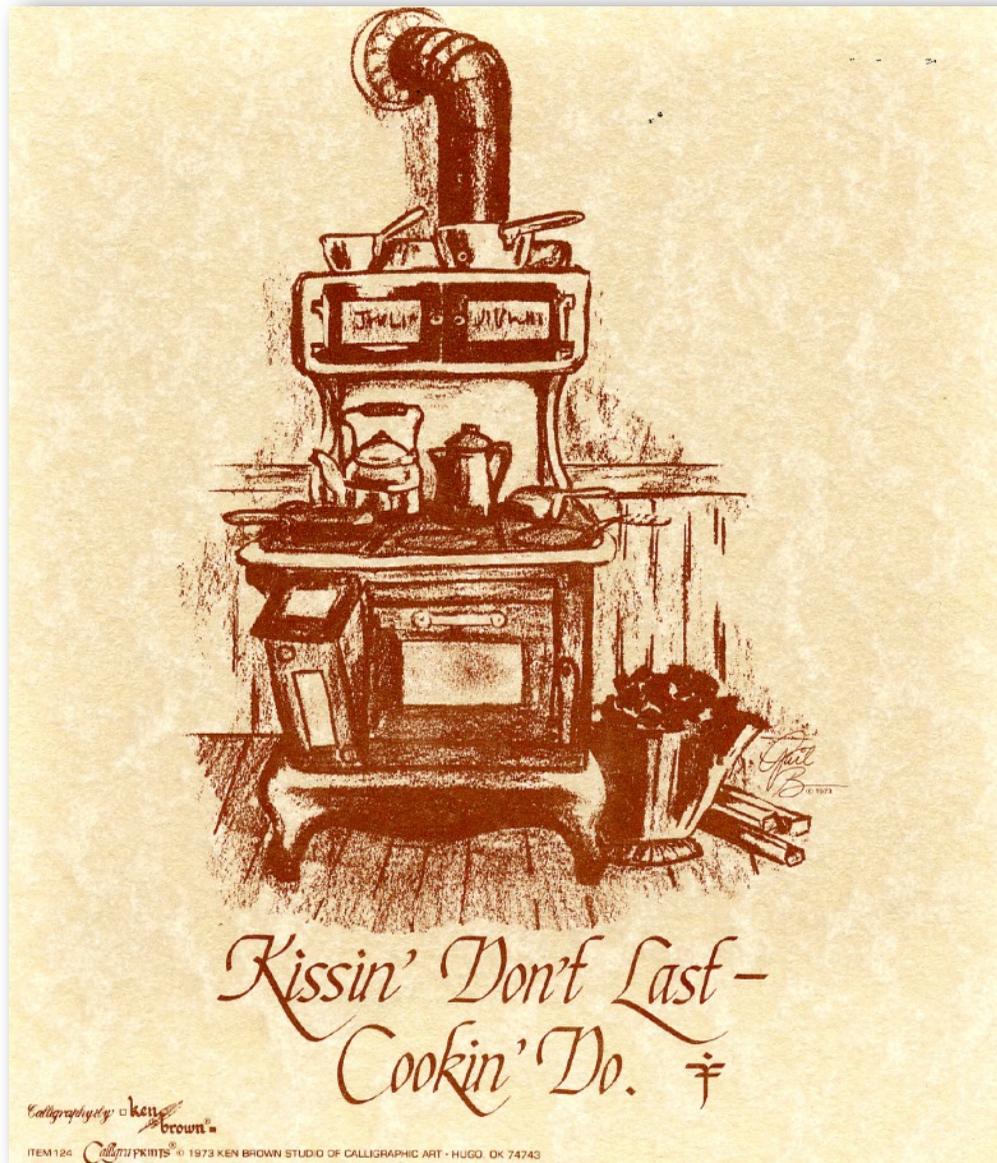
In 1976 I self-published a 32-page book with simple instructions and photographs showing my technique for

creating calligraphic letters with a chisel-edged pen. [That book led to other books](#), kits, videos, and teaching workshops where I spread the word and concept of learning to make beautiful letters by hand.

In late 1992, a former dentist, Lew Jensen, introduced me to the dental drill as an artist's tool. He had known my work for decades, though we had never met.. At an art convention in Pasadena, CA, he told me if I could correlate my technique with a chisel pen to that of a round, carbide dental bur spinning at 300,000 rpm, and use it as a lettering tool, my life would be forever changed. It took me a full year after his gift of an engraving system to see that his prediction was bold and accurate.

With almost 800 public events, and just months shy of 25 years doing it, I've hand-engraved tens of thousands of objects with a dental drill. NOW...that's 99% of ALL my Calligraphy, though I do still spread a little ink now and then.

***In these randomly-published *BrownLines Then & Now*...I'll re-feature photos and instructions from previous issues, along with new material as well. If this raises your interest for a fun-filled creative outlet, or a very productive new income stream, you know where we are.***



*One of the early series of parchment prints with Gail's charcoal drawing and a few words in Calligraphy. The prints of about 60 different designs, in various sizes, were shipped all over the country for the decoupage craze in the 70s.*



*This was one of the most popular of the items purchased from us, framed, and marketed by HOME INTERIORS & GIFTS in Dallas, TX. Published in 1992, it remains one of our favorites. Many of our prints are still available from The Ken Brown Studio, unframed, as fresh and meaningful as the day they were introduced.*

## A few words about the new format...

Our son, Kevin, the professional photographer in the family, produces an on-line newsletter and got me onto the trend a couple of years ago. Kevin's is a much slicker production than this...with his razor-sharp photos and well-chosen words. Recently, he switched to the wide format showing up on many computer displays and on all HD television sets. So...Dad took the cue and followed.

If you don't have a wide format monitor, you may have to scroll a bit horizontally. Hope you like the new format...let me know what you think. And get one of those wide screens!

This issue is devoted wholly to Calligraphy. Well, almost. Someone gave me some good advice several years ago. He said, "Keep the main thing the main thing!" A lot of our focus for a long time has been on Engraving Calligraphy...but it all came from CALLIGRAPHY. With pens. With ink. With markers. So, we'll focus on that in this issue.

-Ken



*I stand at an adjustable drawing table with a drafting machine for layout and light penciled guidelines. I have more mobility and have always been more comfortable in this position when lettering anything large.(This page from March 2008 edition)*



*Three unusual decanters came to my door from the RIEDEL folks. They were recognizing three of their premier restaurant accounts with a cool and expensive....almost five hundred bucks each...personalized decanter. Riedel provided the logo and I stippled it on each along with a name. Used a #2 round carbide for each peice. The wine bottle directly behind shows the relative size of each.*

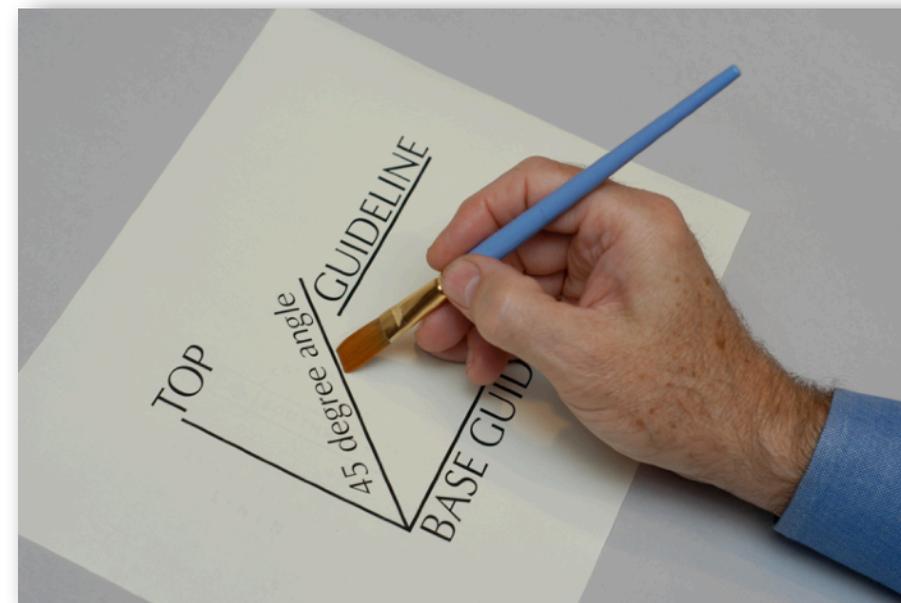
# Brush Lettering on a wall.



Several years ago I need a photo of some wall lettering done with flat brushes. It was for a Seminar I was teaching in Las Vegas; part of the Class was devoted to the layout and brush-lettering Calligraphy on a vertical wall. It's not the easiest task with a brush but, with the right procedures it can be a breeze. This aspect of using Calligraphy is not for everyone but is usually covered in a brief part of our Calligraphy Workshops. This wall is in the front office of our Studio in McKinney, TX

## Ken Brown Calligraphy RULE ONE

There are four rules for the positions of the hand and the instrument you're using to do Calligraphy. Here is the RULE ONE. **The brush must be at a 45 degree angle to the base line at all times.** This is a constant that never changes.



The edge of the brush, marker, pen, or whatever you're using **MUST** be aligned at all times with a 45 degree line off the base line. The base guide is where letters sit. As you can see, an "L" is drawn on the paper. The chisel edge of the tool must align with a line that splits the "L". That is the 45 degree line. Whether a marker, pen, brush, or popcicle stick, this is a constant. **RULE TWO** next time. To get on the fast track learning, attend one of our Seminars or purchase **THE KEN BROWN HANDBOOK** to learn at home. (This page from March 2008 edition)



*Two life-long friends and hunting buddies had identical shotguns. The son of one of the men who died recently, decided to give his Dad's gun to the friend. To make it even a more genuine treasure for the gentleman, the son wanted a special inscription noting the family's gift. A slightly used #2 round carbide engraved on the rather soft metal.*



**LEATHERMAN** is a well-known brand of multi-tools. Every Christmas a local firm brings one for every employee who has reached 15 years of service during the year. I engrave several each year.

# *A case for the right camera.*

*In the back room there is a shelf with a multitude of cameras I've used through the years. From the antiquated models that used roll film...a couple of those from the 70s!...to point and shoot, to 35 mm digital with interchangeable lenses.*

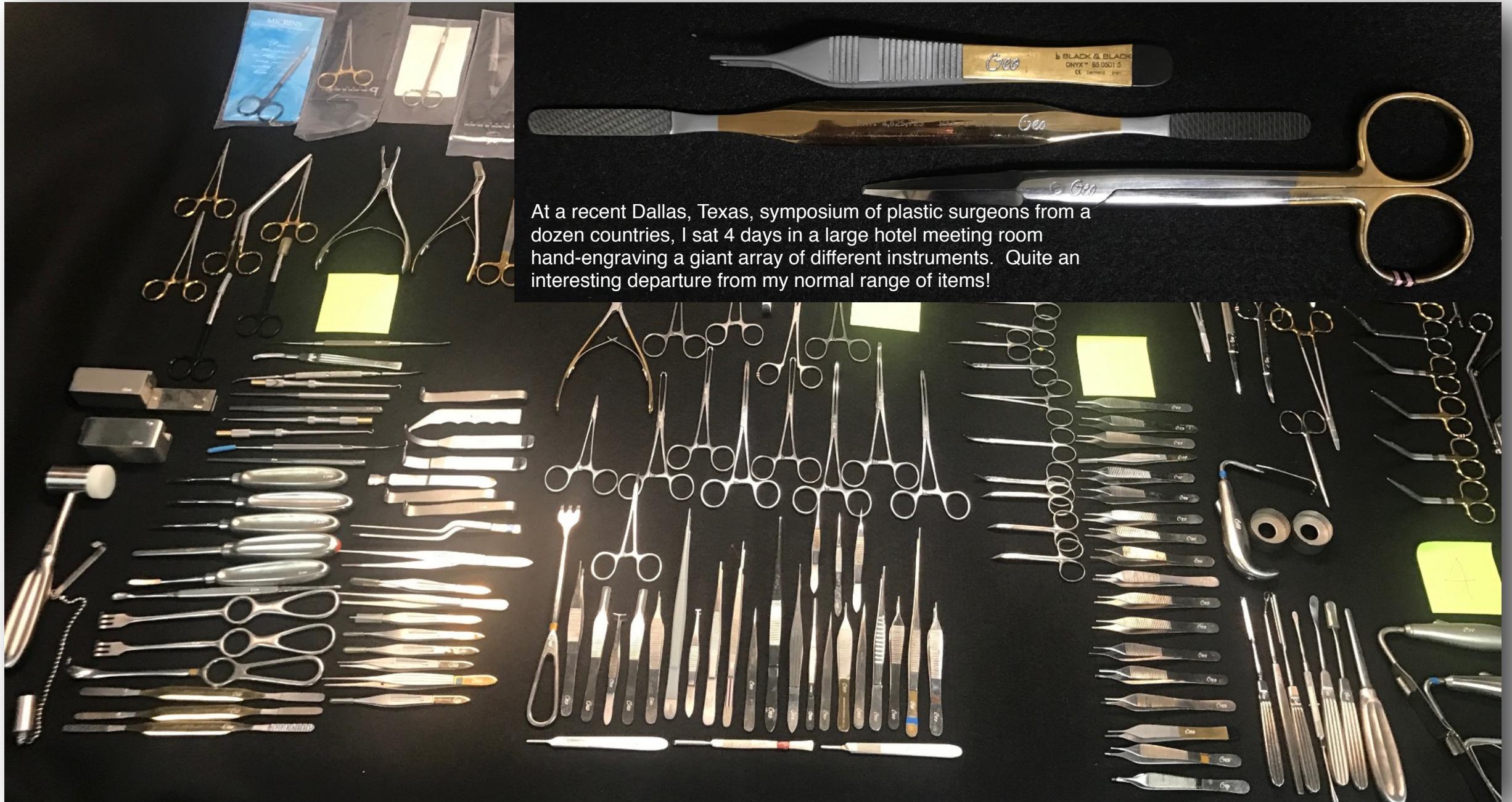
*They're all waiting for my inspiration to put them up for sale on Craig's List or ebay. They are no longer needed for the photos I shoot both for business and pleasure.*

*At right is a photo shot with my iPhone 7+, handheld with available light. No tripod, no strobes. Quick and easy. This rather large phone with a big screen, has a new feature that offers what Apple calls DEPTH EFFECT. With the camera's TWO lenses...a wide angle and a regular lens...the camera takes TWO shots with one push of the button. An internal processor matches the two images and throws the background out of focus, making the subject in the foreground in sharp focus.*

*Of course a professional photographer will have a shoulder bag full of bodies and lenses for special needs that a smartphone's camera could never do. For what most of the rest of us need for photos can now fit in our shirt pocket.*

*Now, I don't think of having a bigger phone....I have a smaller camera!*





At a recent Dallas, Texas, symposium of plastic surgeons from a dozen countries, I sat 4 days in a large hotel meeting room hand-engraving a giant array of different instruments. Quite an interesting departure from my normal range of items!

For more information on how to learn my method  
for hand-engraving Calligraphy with a dental drill...  
and change your life as you never imagined...

[see details here.](#)

*Terms available upon request.*  
Four seats still available in the  
May 17-20 Workshop in Texas.

