



Embassy of the United States of America  
Vilnius, Lithuania  
The Ambassador

August 11, 2023

Mr. Richard Bickel  
96 6th Street  
Apalachicola, FL 32320

Dear Richard,

Before I leave my position as U.S. Ambassador to Lithuania, I would like to thank you profusely for allowing your beautiful photography to be included in the Florida-focused exhibition at my official residence organized through the Department of State Art in Embassies program. I incorporated the exhibition extensively in my diplomatic work here, using the works as an opportunity not only to highlight Florida but also to link them to important policy themes.

When I was working with Department of State curator Braden Malnik on pulling together the collection, I wanted to ensure there were pieces that explained the Florida where I grew up. Your photography did that best, showing the joy of childhood near the water and a culture of old Florida that is disappearing. It is even more delightful that we have a connection in Apalachicola through Pam Miller Mahr, who lived across the street from me in Leesburg. Our families were linked for several generations; our grandparents were best friends, and her mother was a bridesmaid in my parents' wedding.

The collection was seen — not infrequently with tours I gave personally — by numerous groups of Lithuanians, ranging from art students to the most senior government ministers. The collection was similarly viewed by many senior level U.S. government officials, including U.S. Senators and Representatives. The collection also featured in a number of press interviews I did.

For me personally, it was a privilege to live daily with your photos. Thank you again for helping me and my embassy team better explain the United States through the magnificence of your art.

Kindest regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Robert S. Gilchrist". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being the most prominent.

Robert Gilchrist  
Ambassador  
United States Embassy  
Vilnius, Lithuania